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MEMORIALS

OF THE

EARLY PROGRESS OF METHODISM

IN THE

EASTERN STATES;

COMPRISING

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF ITS PREACHERS, SKETCHES OF ITS PRIMITIVE CHURCHES, AND REMINISCENCES OF ITS EARLY STRUGGLES AND SUCCESSES.

(SECOND SERIES.)

BY ABEL STEVENS,

AUTHOR OF "MEMORIALS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO THE EASTERN STATES," ETC.

BOSTON:
C. H. PEIRCE AND COMPANY.
1852.

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PREFACE.

In a former series of these "Memorials," the author stated that the pretensions of the work were necessarily of the most unostentatious character. He claimed not for it the dignity of History, nor even that of Annals. Under the convenient name of *Memorials*, he attempted to give, with as much chronological consistency as possible, the scanty data, respecting the *introduction* of Methodism into New England, which still remained. These he found so vague, that he would probably have abandoned the undertaking in despair, had he not been publicly pledged to it. It was with much hesitancy that he published the volume, for he was fully conscious of the unavoidable inadequacy of its tribute to the good and truly great men whose names it attempted to rescue from oblivion. He will not dissemble that its reception has flattered and gratefully surprised him. The church welcomed it as not an unworthy contribution towards a fuller history of the denomination, and about 10,000 copies were rapidly sold.*

The present volume, relating to a more recent part of our history, will be found more abundant in incident, and it is hoped more satisfactory throughout. Some of its characters, however imperfectly delineated, are examples of the truest human and Christian nobleness; and it has been no small relief to the peculiar difficulties of the author's task, to know that his feeble labors were serving to reinstate before the eye of the church the heroic evangelists who founded its great and still developing destinies, but who, not by the want of eminent merit, but the infelicity of their times, have had scarcely any record in the church.

Doubtless some readers will miss favorite names, which they expected to find in these pages. The author must at once, and very positively, decline all responsibility for any dissatisfaction on these accounts. He has made, in vain, repeated exertions to procure *materiale* for other cases. Any omissions of the kind can be repaired in future editions, should he be supplied with the necessary information. It must be borne in mind that the present is the primary record of the kind in the eastern section

* This success was, doubtless, owing in large measure to Charles H. Peirce, Esq., at whose suggestion the work was commenced, and whose rare taste and enterprise brought it out in a style of unusual elegance.

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of the church; defects are, therefore, not only quite excusable, but unavoidable. The future historian of our cause must be responsible to repair them, by the corrections which their publication may elicit.

The preceding volume was distinguished from the present as Memorials of the *Introduction* of Methodism into the Eastern States; the present consists of Memorials of its *Progress;* the two works, while intimately related, are, nevertheless, somewhat independent. The introductory chapter of the latter will supply, at least, a statistical summary of the former, to such readers as may not have examined it; while some additional views, not unimportant, perhaps, to the illustration of the narrative generally, are also presented.

The author designed, at first, to extend his narrative to a later date. Several reasons, however, occurred to change his purpose, one of which the reader will readily perceive. A later date would have imposed the delicate task of treating more fully of characters still living, and of events still vivid, not only in the memories, but in the passions, and, it may be, prejudices, of our people. Our denominational history must take cognizance of these; but the special character of the present work seemed to render it desirable to avoid them. It would indeed be incongruous to the sacred and chivalric scenes which we commemorate to mingle with them the prejudices of our own times. The history of our founders — of our heroic period — is altogether unique. It has both its chronological and its moral completeness; — we have endeavored to regard both. At the same time, the plan of our work, though apparently quite limited, admits, in reality, of a very extended range. Many of the characters, and all the churches commemorated, have continued to our day. In their individual history, we have been able to trace down, somewhat, the lines of our general history, without embarrassing the narrative with the objections above mentioned. The apparent chronological limits of the volume are therefore not its real limits, and are not without considerable convenience.

As a large portion of the work is historico-biographical, the author has endeavored to render its exemplifications of Christian experience as full as might be appropriate. Such passages are not only morally valuable, but historically so; for they are intrinsically historical illustrations of the spirit of the times, — much more so than are ordinary incidents. He has not disguised the peculiarities and crudities of those early days, many of which have now passed away; their faithful record is essential to the integrity of the work. The unpretending character of the volume has allowed him to introduce many scenes, and perhaps some characters, which the "dignity of history" might reject. It is believed the reader will find these not the least interesting illustrations of the times. His original authorities he has often allowed to speak for themselves, especially in matters of fact. Ample references are given in the margin to his extant authorities.

Boston, June 17, 1851.

SURPLUS
DUPLICATE

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MEMORIALS OF METHODISM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Methodism in the last Century. — Theology of New England. — Ecclesiastical Institutions. — Declension of vital Religion. — The Methodist Ministry. — Asbury. — Lee. — Pickering. — Religious Inquiry. — Spirituality of Methodism. — Its Modes of Worship. — Its Hymnology.

We have traced, in a former work, the introduction of Methodism into New England, from the time (1789) when Jesse Lee commenced his mission, by proclaiming on the highway at Norwalk, Conn., "Ye must be born again," down to the close of the eighteenth century.* The ecclesiastical year 1800–1 is the appropriate epoch for the resumption of our narrative, — not only because it begins a new century, and is the date of the organization of the New England Conference, by its separation from that of New York; but also because what may properly be called the introduction of Methodism into the Eastern States had then been completed, and its remaining history is the record of successful progress, rather than of preliminary struggles.

We propose, then, in returning, at this date, to our task, to record such memorials of the progress of the denomination, in the early part of the present century, as we may be able to gather from the scattered and fast evanescing data which still remain within our reach.

It may not, however, be out of place, before entering upon our subsequent narrative, and while yet standing between the two

* Memorials of the Introduction of Methodism into the Eastern States, &c. Peirce, Boston; Scott & Lane, New York.

centuries, — the introductory struggles and more regular progress of our cause, — to re-survey those preparatory years of labor and sacrifice — their successful results, and the conditions which affected, favorably or unfavorably, those results.

Lee spent three months of incessant travel and labor before he succeeded in forming his first Class; and formed it, at last, of but three "elect ladies." Three months more passed before the second Class was organized; and this consisted of but two members. The prospect was most discouraging and repulsive. In selecting Connecticut as the first scene of his operations, he chose the most impracticable portion of the whole field before him; for no part of New England was more thoroughly prepossessed by the traditional sentiments of the Puritans, or more completely controlled by the rigid but simple mechanism of their ecclesiastical organization. He was not only denied, generally, the use of the parish pulpits, but sometimes had, himself, to light up the school-houses and court-rooms in which he preached, and ring the bell to announce the time and place of the service. Looked upon as a dangerous fanatic, he was frequently refused even the usual hospitalities of the community; and repeated his visits in some instances as often as three times, before any one invited him home, or even accosted him in the common language of courtesy. The pulpits assailed him, and his few coadjutors, as "wolves in sheep's clothing;" and if their rustic hearers admitted them to their domestic hospitalities, it was, not unfrequently, to dispute with them about "principles," and to dismiss them as incorrigible heretics, to be received no more. Of all extant illustrations of that theological rigor which deformed so much not only the religious but the social life of our fathers, we know of none more chilling than the brief, unexaggerated, but ever-recurring notices of Lee's receptions, recorded in his journals.

His determination conquered these grievous difficulties. In three months he had formed the first Methodist circuit in New England, comprising a reach of country which is now interspersed with scores of flourishing churches. In about seven months the third Class was organized, consisting of but four persons. After eight months of invincible persistence in his

solitary labors, and through mortifying treatment, three additional laborers, Jacob Brush, Daniel Smith and George Roberts, "men of might," from Maryland, entered the field, as his companions in labor and suffering; and the faithful pioneer describes significantly, though briefly, the emotions with which he hailed their approach: "When I saw them riding up, I stood and looked at them, and could say from my heart, 'Thou hast well done that thou art come.' No one knows, but God and myself, what comfort and joy I felt at their arrival. Surely the Lord has had respect unto my prayers, and granted my request.' Relieved by this timely aid, Lee immediately commenced a comprehensive survey of the whole New England field, preaching, day and night, as he went; and the first ecclesiastical year (of about sixteen months) closed, with four laborers in the field; two hundred members in the church; two chapels, at least, erected; one district and five circuits formed; Connecticut, Rhode Island and Eastern Massachusetts, definitely surveyed for more systematic labors, and the principles of Methodism proclaimed by Lee himself in all the New England States.

The next Conference year included only about eight months; but during that period Lee preached at most of his former appointments in Connecticut; traversed, with incessant labors, the eastern part of Massachusetts; founded, in Lynn, the first Methodist society of that state, consisting of about sixty members, and succeeded, after repeated and prolonged and almost insurmountable failures, in permanently introducing Methodism into the metropolis. His colleagues, in the west of New England, had also been successful; and at the Conference, held in New York city, six circuits were reported, containing four hundred and eighty-one church-members, being a gain of about three hundred in eight months. Methodism had taken permanent root in New England; and the following year began with *one* district, *six* circuits, — four in Connecticut and two in Massachusetts, — *eleven* circuit preachers, and *one* presiding elder. Lee, as leader of the little band, travelled in Rhode Island, Massachusetts east and west, and New Hampshire. Asbury deemed the new field important enough by this time for an episcopal

visit; and passed over Connecticut, Rhode Island and Eastern Massachusetts, preaching daily, and counselling and inspiriting his laborious itinerants. Special revivals cheered them this year; and they reported, at its close, three additional circuits, and thirteen hundred and fifty-eight members, giving an increase of eight hundred and seventy-seven. The first chapel in Massachusetts was erected in Lynn; the first Class in Boston, comprising fifteen members, and the first circuit in Rhode Island, were formed. During the ensuing Conference year (1792–3), the infant church continued to advance. The first New England Conference was held in the first and still unfinished chapel of Methodism in Massachusetts. Eighteen itinerants travelled the Eastern States, and the year closed with returns of seventeen hundred and thirty-nine members, an advance of more than one-fourth on the returns of the preceding year. All the circuits, except one, reported an increase, and four circuits made returns for the first time. The first returns from the State of Rhode Island were made. Three years had not yet passed since the formation of the first society at Stratfield, Connecticut; but the average gain of the struggling cause had been four hundred and thirty-five per year. The year 1793–4 began with two Conferences in New England (at Lynn and Tolland), and five additional circuits; the *Province of Maine* was added to the systematic plan of labor; the itinerant band comprised *twenty-five* evangelists, and among them was the first native Methodist preacher in New England — a youth whose subsequent life and hoary years did not detract from the peculiar and honorable distinction. The year closed with an addition of one-fourth to the number of circuits, and three hundred to the returns of members.

Thus closed the first five years of the history of Methodism in New England. The next year commenced with the addition of New Hampshire and Vermont to the regular itinerant work. The ecclesiastical field included *two districts*, and a part of a third; *eighteen circuits*, an increase of five; and *thirty* preachers, *five* more than were appointed the preceding year; and, though a year of adversity and loss in the general church, it closed with

an increase in New England of five hundred and thirty-six members. The first Methodist chapel in Maine had been erected; and from that province, though without a society at the beginning of the year, its solitary itinerant returned three hundred and eighteen members.

The ensuing year (1795–6) was one of severe conflict, and some reverses. It began with no increase of circuits or laborers, and closed with a decrease of fifty-six members; but the ecclesiastical plans of the infant cause were brought into more thorough organization, and its general interests were invigorated; two new circuits were formed in Maine, and extended systematic arrangements adopted for both Vermont and New Hampshire. From Norwalk in Connecticut to the Penobscot in Maine, and from Provincetown in Massachusetts to Montpelier in Vermont, Methodism had established its powerful itinerant system.

The year 1796–7 began with *twenty-one* circuits, and *thirty-one* preachers; and the returns, at its close, show an aggregate membership of three thousand — an increase for the year of four hundred and eighty, being about one-fourth the gains of the whole denomination during that period. There was an addition of three new circuits, though the numerical gain appears by the minutes to have been but one, owing to the incorporation of two former circuits into neighboring appointments. The following year was the most prosperous one yet enjoyed in the east by the new evangelists; they did not increase much the number of circuits, but extended them greatly. Several chapels were erected, many new societies were formed, and wide-spread revivals took place. Vermont yielded its first returns of members, and the whole returns for New England amounted to four thousand one hundred and fifty-five, a gain of twelve hundred and sixteen, or more than one-third, on those of the previous year. The increase in New England was more than three times as great as that of the rest of the church, in both the republic and Canada. A band of at least twenty-five local preachers had been raised up; and all the New England States, for the first time, were reported among the returns of the denomination.

The year 1798–9 was distinguished by the session of the first Conference in Maine, in which state Methodism had taken deep root. The itinerant corps in New England now included a host of men, of no ordinary character and talent; and their labors, pursued with scarcely the intermission of a day, spread the doctrines of Methodism in all directions. Extended revivals occurred during the year, especially on the recent circuits in Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire. Three new circuits were formed in Vermont alone. The aggregate membership at the end of the year was about five thousand; the increase about eight hundred — more than two-thirds of the gains of the whole denomination in the same period.

At the Conference for the ecclesiastical year 1799–1800, five new appointments were made in the Eastern States — *four* circuits and *one* station. The first decade of Methodism in New England had closed, and the results were *three* districts, and a large portion of a fourth, which reached into its limits, from the State of New York; about *thirty* circuits, more than *forty* preachers, and about *five thousand* members. The average increase of its circuits had been *three* per year, its itinerant ministers *four*, its membership *five hundred.* The ensuing Conference year closed the century, and what we have chosen to consider the introductory labors of Methodism in the east. It was distinguished by the addition to the ministry of an apostolic band of twelve itinerants, and by extensive revivals of religion; nearly every section of the new field was favored with success. Another circuit was formed in Rhode Island. Considerable additions were made to the church in Connecticut. In Massachusetts there were local declensions, but great general advancement; the first returns of members from Nantucket were reported in the minutes, amounting to sixty-five; and on one of the western circuits of the state, no less than one hundred and eighty were received into the societies. A new circuit was organized in New Hampshire. The small but heroic band of laborers in Maine passed through severe struggles; both the pulpit and the press attacked it. One of its hardy laborers, the devoted Joshua Taylor, was mobbed, and drummed with

tin kettles out of Castine; yet the persecuted cause advanced, extensive revivals prevailed, and large additions were made to the church. The evangelists in Vermont met with extraordinary success; a new circuit was added to their field of labor, and nearly *five hundred* members to their societies. About four years had passed since the first regular itinerant preaching of the new denomination began in that state; now there were about *eleven hundred* Methodists within its limits; they had nearly quadrupled in three years.

Methodism had laid substantially its foundations in all the New England States. Its itinerants had extended their regular labors from Fairfield, in Connecticut, to the remotest settlement of Maine, and from the southernmost islands of Massachusetts to St. Albans, in Vermont. They assumed the confidence, the certainty, of permanent success; they had established their cause for ages, for all future time, as they believed; and at the close of these eleven years, it included four districts, thirty-one circuits, nearly fifty itinerant preachers, and nearly five thousand members, — an average of one hundred and twenty to each preacher.

Such, then, was the introductory progress of Methodism in New England. Comparatively insignificant as it may appear at this day, it was great, and even signal, in those times.

It may not be uninteresting to view, in connection with these results, some of the conditions which promoted or retarded them.

Doubtless the traditional theology of New England was the chief difficulty with which the new denomination had to contend. No population had ever, perhaps, been more generally imbued with dogmatic religious ideas. The primitive rigor of theological opinion in these states had begun to relax, especially since the Revolution; but it is difficult for a people of a common and almost unmixed lineage to throw off, generally, the sentiments of their early national education. If all did not believe the prevalent theology, yet all were familiar with it, and were prepared by it to repel the Methodistic doctrines, as novelties, if not fatal heresies. The Methodist pioneers, while they occa-

sionally met with earnest and inquiring minds, who had not found repose in the Puritan theology, and who welcomed a more liberal and more vital faith, were nevertheless beset in all their travels by theological assailants. Even the popular mind had acquired from the system of Calvin a habit of metaphysical subtilty, and the new comers found themselves compelled often to waive their more express and vital themes of preaching, and enter the arena of polemics. Lee's journals abound in ludicrous notices of such rencontres, and they were so common as to produce a characteristic effect on our first ministry; though it was composed of "flaming witnesses" of the great doctrines of spiritual religion, yet was it notable for its downright polemical power, and its skill in the Genevan controversy. They had the sagacity to perceive, in the outset, that no compromise could be made between the polemics of the two systems, and that any success obtained by concession must be but temporary; they therefore accepted at once the challenge of their theological opponents, and perseveringly rebutted the Calvinistic dogmas, courageously enduring, till they vanquished, the hostility which such a course could not fail to provoke.

These adverse opinions had the additional influence of a simple but well-organized ecclesiastical system. Congregationalism has little apparent machinery; but its colonial prevalence in New England had extended it everywhere over the Eastern States in a net-work of related parishes — related to each other by a common relation to the state, as well as by common religious interests. Every town, village and hamlet, had its ecclesiastical provisions and regulations. The chief characteristics, in fact, of the civic and domestic life of New England, grew out of its ecclesiastical institutions and theological education. The "meeting-house" was not only universal; it had precedence in its erection, and in the eligibility of its site, before the school-house or the court-house, and the clergyman predominated, in public respect and influence, over all other functionaries. A most favorable indication did these facts present, notwithstanding many attributes of ecclesiastical rigor, polemical bigotry, and social as well as religious intolerance. But though such was the prevalence

of religious ideas and ecclesiastical provisions, the new evangelists felt themselves justified in entering the Eastern States, by the general declension of spiritual religion which had befallen the Puritan churches. The decay of piety was, as we have heretofore seen,* profound and universal, and began to develop its usual results of both doctrinal and practical corruption. The mission of Methodism, as recognized by its adherents, was the revival of personal religion in the world, — the spread of Scriptural holiness over Christian lands, more than the propagation of Christianity in heathen countries; the plans of Wesley himself even extended not beyond this design. The Methodist Itinerants came preaching repentance and holiness of heart and life; but notwithstanding the directly spiritual purpose of their labors, the settled clergy everywhere met them with opposition; they were beset on every hand with, and often entangled in, the web of the established ecclesiastical arrangements. Disregarding the minutely defined parish boundaries, they were rebuked, and often repelled with astonishment, as unscrupulous intruders. Religious taxes, though somewhat modified since the Revolution, were still in force, and the converts to Methodism were refused recognition as an independent religious body; they were forced to pay tribute to their persecutors, their cattle were driven to the auctioneer's stand, and they themselves cast into prison, for refusing to support a creed at which both their hearts and their understandings revolted.

Still more effectually adverse to them than these direct results of the established religious system, was the moral advantage which the churches and pastors of the latter had above them, by a long and well-endowed respectability, that could not but be contrasted by the popular mind with the poverty and obscurity of the new "sect everywhere spoken against." Custom is more powerful than law; and fashion, with its all-controlling influence, is but habitual custom. The established religion had the advantage of this unequalled power, though generally destitute of vital influence over the popular mind, and not a little impaired in the hold of its doctrines on the popular understanding. The "minis-

* Mem. of Int. of Methodism, chap. II.

ter," and "deacon," and "squire," were at once the representatives of the respectability and of the Congregationalism of the village. The dissenting sects which had dared furtively to intrude into the parish bounds had gathered to themselves usually only a few of the poor and unpretending class. What, then, could be the reception of these itinerant fanatics, as they were deemed? what the consideration of a sect which met in barns, court-rooms, or farm-house kitchens, whose clergy, notwithstanding their acknowledged talents, had not learning (then more indispensably associated with the sacred office than now), and whose people were gathered chiefly from among citizens, the circumstances or pretensions of whom were too humble to render important to them the public sentiment or village vogue?

The declension of personal religion to which we have alluded, while it was a reason for the labors of the new evangelists, was also one of the impediments in their way. Their distinctive sentiments were principally such as related to inward religion — direct and immediate conversion; vital piety, of which external observances and even practical morals were not so much the substance as the fruit and evidence; the Witness of the Spirit, giving to the devout mind comfortable assurance of acceptance with God; Sanctification, which, under the Scriptural name of "Perfection," taught an entire consecration of heart and life; the final danger of backslidden professors of the faith (a doctrine everywhere repelled), — these were tenets to win the interest of those who, here and there, were hungering and thirsting after righteousness, but not to conciliate either the mass of formal adherents to the predominant worship, or even the eccentric or discontented few who, in every community, are always found ready for changes.

We would not depreciate the true condition of the New England church at this period. It unquestionably possessed a very salutary and almost omnipresent influence over the popular mind; but the Revolution, with all its advantages, had introduced general irreligion, and a fearful relaxation of morals. One immorality alone threatened a general desolation of society, and had placed the marks of its ravages on almost every

village ; — the prospect was that we were becoming a nation of drunkards. While the exterior observances of religion had become too habitual to be readily cast off, and the traditional theology was, as we have stated, universally known and generally avowed, infidel tendencies, nevertheless, were beginning to develop themselves. A mis-called Arminianism, quite anti-evangelical in its character, and alarming to the more devout clergy of the time, was rapidly infecting the public mind. Socinianism, or at least the Arianism of later times, had already germinated ; and Universalism, always in this country more practically than theoretically corrupt, had taken obscure root in the church generally ; both these forms of error in a few years assumed an independent and organic existence.

Revivals of religion had once prevailed in New England, but none of any importance had been known within a half-century before Lee's arrival. The great religious interest produced by Whitefield's visits had not only long since subsided, but had been defeated, to a considerable extent, by public and formal opposition from the clergy. Edwards' revival labors had been attended by a hostile reäction ; he was dismissed from the scene of his apostolic ministry in Northampton, and retired to labor among the Stockbridge Indians, and to die out of New England. While, therefore, the traditional religious ideas and usages were yet prevalent enough to oppose everywhere the pioneers of Methodism, irreligion and heretical tendencies also obstructed their course. They presented a hostile aspect to both, and made no compromise with either. Yet, as we have seen, they advanced into the new field with a success which must be pronounced quite extraordinary, under these inauspicious circumstances.

Let us look now at some of the conditions which favored their success.

An important reason for it was, doubtless, the really great character of the men who composed the first Methodist ministry in New England. It may be questioned whether our subsequent ministry in the Eastern States, or any other portion of the church, has equalled in substantial ability the Methodist Itinerants who entered New England before the end of the eighteenth

century. Their successors have had more literary training, but this has not yet been sufficiently thorough and general to give them a marked distinction from their fathers; while, on the other hand, the latter had the stern and effective education of extraordinary circumstances, — such circumstances as could not fail to convert them into heroes, or drive them individually from the field.

Asbury was one of the most sagacious of men. He appreciated the difficulties of the new cause in the east, and showed his sagacity in the selection of evangelists for it. Most of them were men of remarkable talents and character, — Lee, Roberts, Smith, Bloodgood, Mills, Hunt, Taylor, Mudge, Pickering, Ostrander, Mitchell, McCoombs, Brodhead, Merritt, Sabin, Bostwick, Beauchamp, Soule, Hedding, Webb, Kibby, and many others who were "giants in those days." Such of them as have survived till our day have, amidst the infirmities of old age, stood prominently in the church for their extraordinary traits. Some of them were distinguished by marvellous natural eloquence, the effects of which on popular assemblies have seldom been equalled in our times; others were noted for polemical shrewdness and successful championship against the theological metaphysics of their day. If they were not the best scholars, they were, as a body, the best theologians, our ministry has yet had.

They were, with scarcely an exception, men of indomitable energy. We doubt, indeed, whether they have been exceeded in their labors and travels in any age of the church. Asbury, their superintendent, preached, upon an average, one sermon a day for fifty years, besides incessant other public labors; he surpassed Wesley in his ministerial journeys. His travels more than averaged 6000 miles a year, and equalled the circumference of the globe every four years. And these were to a great extent performed on horseback, and over the new roads of our frontier wildernesses. All New England was but one circuit under Lee; and he actually preached in all its states, during his first year. When others came to his help, it was but one District under his Presiding Eldership. He often travelled with two horses, leading one for a relay when the other should

be fatigued. Pickering's district, as Presiding Elder, at the end of the century, began at Providence, extended down the Providence river, taking in the circuits on each side to Newport; thence it reached to the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, thence over the whole of Cape Cod, and returning took in all the eastern portion of Massachusetts, and all the interior circuits of the state, except one on its western extremity, and penetrated through New Hampshire, to beyond the centre of Vermont. Many of the earlier circuits were 500 miles in compass, and often, with daily travelling, required six weeks to supply their appointments. With these vast fields of travel they combined continual preaching, exhortation, and Class leading. They averaged two sermons a day (three on the Sabbath), besides a class or prayer meeting almost daily.

Their continual change of air, and exercise on horseback, were favorable to health; and it was not unusual to meet among them men of extraordinary robustness; yet most of them suffered from excessive labors, poor shelter in the cabins of the wilderness, the fatigue of night preaching, and travels through the storms of winter. Catarrh, asthma, bleeding of the lungs and pulmonary consumption, were common diseases among them, and often compelled them to "locate." Of 650 travelling preachers, who had been on the Minutes in the United States by the end of the last century, about 500 died located, and many of the remainder were a longer or shorter time in the local ranks, but were able to resume their ministerial travels, and died in the "regular work." There are, indeed, very few of our elder ministry still lingering among us, who wear not the marks of their early sufferings, the honorable scars of their evangelical heroism. Our Conference records show a host of martyrs, if not to persecution, yet at least to devotion to the ministerial mission. The tables of mortality scarcely afford a parallel. From 1773 to 1845, there died in the Itinerant ministry of the M. E. Church 737 preachers, besides the large proportion who, as we have just seen, must have died, during that period, in a local relation to the ministry. The ages at which these recorded deaths occurred furnish a striking evidence of the peril to health and life which attended the Itinerant

work. There were among them 41 who died between 20 and 25 years of age; 203 between 25 and 35; 121 between 35 and 45; 88 between 45 and 60; 42 between 60 and 70; 35 between 70 and 80, and 9 between 80 and 91. Nearly half of all whose deaths are recorded fell before they were 30 years old. These facts become doubly startling when we learn the very short periods of service which these self-sacrificing men were enabled to endure. The time spent in the Itinerant work by 672 has been ascertained: 199 spent from 2 to 5 years; 209 from 5 to 12; 129 from 12 to 25; 90 from 25 to 40; 32 from 40 to 50; and 13 from 50 to 61. About two-thirds died after twelve years' Itinerant service.*

Men of such talents and such devotion could not fail of success. The popular mind, however disposed at first to be merry at them, as eccentric or fanatic wanderers, soon came to recognize them as apostles and "sons of thunder." And despite all the prestige of the established church, and the machinery of its opposition, they left an abiding impression on all their extended courses, and, as we have seen, in ten or eleven years had founded Methodism forever in the Eastern States.

The spirit of speculative inquiry to which we have referred as in part adverse to Methodism, by reason of the heresies which it had been gradually introducing, was not without a favorable effect also. Many minds, revolting from the severities of the Calvinistic theology, had not yet seized on the errors of Socinianism or Universalism, but were prepared for views more liberal than the prevalent creed, and yet as evangelical. Methodism met their demand. The most rigid dogmas of Calvinism had been taught them; even the damnation of infants, a logical result of Calvinism not usually avowed in our day, was then an item in the elementary instruction of the schools.† Independent minds, thinking for themselves and rejecting such tenets as inadmissible, if not blasphemous — and self-distrusting ones, sink-

*Prof. Baker, in Zion's Herald.

†See "Day of Doom," an old poem, by Michael Wigglesworth, and used as a schoolbook not more than seventy years since. Lyell's Second Visit to U. S., Vol. I., Ed. Rev., 1849. Littell's Living Age, Aug. 25, 1849.

ing in despondence under them, hailed the more genial doctrines of Methodism with a cordial welcome, as the true expression of the Gospel. Hundreds, who had been bound down for years, looked up, and beheld with joy the new light.

There were many also awaiting a more spiritual ministration of the truth, who found it in Methodism. Lee discovered in several instances little bands of devout persons who had been in the habit of meeting periodically to pray, and counsel each other respecting a higher Christian experience, and who greeted his coming as a providential answer to their prayers. He found a small company of this kind at Stratfield, Conn., where he formed his first New England Class. In another town he met with a similar band who had learned something of Methodism, through a casual visit, some six years before, of Rev. Wm. Black, one of the founders of Methodism in the British provinces; they met weekly for mutual religious instruction, and patient prayer for the arrival of a suitable spiritual guide. The itinerant evangelists found always a hearty reception in these cases; their great consolatory themes of universal redemption, direct conversion, the witness of the Spirit, entire sanctification, &c., were received as the elements of the power and life of the Gospel.

Not only were the doctrines of Methodism peculiarly hopeful and vital, but its modes of worship were attractive by a simplicity and animation which appealed to the social sympathies of the people. Its Prayer Meetings, Class Meetings, Love Feasts (a modification of the primitive Agapæ), its Quarterly Conferences, assembling the several societies from great distances; its Camp Meetings, which, with some objectionable liabilities, presented also many advantages in those days of few chapels; the itinerancy of its preachers, uniting numerous societies by the tie of a common pastorate, and bringing the pilgrim preacher, at each appointment in his route, into the families of his people; the familiarity and power of extemporaneous preaching, — these peculiarities gave a community of feeling and a life and energy to the young church, which could not fail to be contrasted in the popular mind with the old and devitalized "standing order." To these considerations should be added, also, the unrivalled

hymnology of Methodism. The doggerel melodies (and melodies most of them must be called, if they were doggerel) of a later day had not yet been introduced; but the richly evangelical and vivid lyrics of Charles Wesley were universally sung by the travelling ministry, and adopted by their new converts, — lyrics which Montgomery has pronounced superior to any other hymns extant, and which, sung not by choirs, but by the assembled multitudes, were often overwhelmingly sublime and powerful, and no insignificant means of the early success of Methodism.*

Such were some of the conditions, favorable and unfavorable, of the experiment of Methodism in New England. These were, however, but subsidiary to that providential agency which disposed the hearts of the people, and opened the way for its introduction. Methodism was providentially designated to the important mission which it has thus far achieved in our country. God has disciplined it by severe trials, but also marvellously upheld and projected it onward by his own right hand, and baptized it with special outpourings of his Spirit. The original conditions of its success may need modifications, as times change; but most of them, as applicable to universal and unchanging human nature, will be found, by the student of its history, to have been the means of its later, as of its earlier triumphs, and should be devoutly guarded, as the elements of its future usefulness.

* Southey says, "Perhaps no poems have ever been so devoutly committed to memory as these, nor quoted so often upon a death-bed. The manner in which they were sung tended to impress them strongly upon the mind; the tune was made wholly subservient to the words, not the words to the tune." — *Life of Wesley.* The minutest modes of English Methodism were originally copied in this country, being introduced, with the system itself, by English preachers.

CHAPTER II.

ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR 1800–1.

General Conference of 1800. — Organization of the New England Conference. — Previous Conferences in New York and New England. — Lee a Candidate for the Episcopal Office. — His Defeat, and subsequent Conduct. — Lee at the New York Conference. — He reënters New England. — Asbury and Whatcoat in New England. — General Lippett.

A General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church was held in Baltimore, in 1800; it began on the sixth day of May, and continued to the twentieth. It is the first session of that body whose records have reached us, and is chiefly important to the history of Methodism in the Eastern States, as the one at which New England was organized into a distinct annual Conference, by its detachment from that of New York. Hitherto the annual Conferences had not been defined by geographical boundaries, but depended upon the convenience of the bishop, and the changing condition of the church, for their limitations, and the times and places of their sessions. One or two sessions a year usually sufficed for the whole church north of Philadelphia, and these were most frequently held within the State of New York. New England pertained to this indefinite northern Conference, though there were, within its own limits, occasional irregular sessions. Henceforth the history of this section of the church becomes more independent and definite. The whole church was now divided into seven Conferences, the limits of which were definitively settled.

It seems to have been a question with Lee whether New York or New England should have the honor of giving title to the hitherto northernmost Conference. He actually ventured to give it the latter name. He says, "It was now determined that there should be seven annual Conferences, and that of New England

should be divided; that one should be called the *New England Conference*, and the other the *New York Conference:* and the bounds for each were fixed."*

The Conference from which Lee was originally sent to New England was the first one held in New York city; another was held there the next year. In the following year (1791), a session was held in New England, as well as in New York. Down to the organization of an independent New England Conference (eleven years), there had been, within the State of New York, thirteen sessions, and eleven within New England; four of those in New York were, however, double sessions (two sessions the same year), while but three such occurred in New England. During these eleven years, there were two successive years (1797 and 1798) in which the sessions were intermitted in New York, being held exclusively in New England. There was but one year (1799) in which the Conference was intermitted in New England. New York, however, has the double advantage of both prior and more numerous sessions.

Another event, which would have further connected the General Conference of 1800 with the history of Methodism in New England, nearly occurred during its session. Lee was a candidate for the Episcopacy. His friends, especially his co-laborers in the east, could not fail to see in him preëminent qualifications for the office. Like Asbury, he was unmarried, — no unimportant consideration, when it is remembered that the church, coëxtensive with the United States and Canada, was but one diocese, and that two weeks' delay, in one place, was a rare occurrence in the Episcopal travels. His energy was indomitable; no man in the connection, except Asbury, had travelled or preached more. He was capable of supervising and directing others, as his New England history had fully proved. Above all, he possessed apostolic piety and zeal — a devotion which never staggered at difficulties. Few men, indeed, presented such apparent and so many claims for the office; and his friends generally ascribed the failure of his election to some private

* Short Hist. of the Methodists, Anno 1800.

misapprehensions, which would have been fully corrected, had they been frankly avowed.* On the first ballot, no candidate had a majority; on the second, there was a tie between Lee and Richard Whatcoat; on the third count, Whatcoat had a majority of four votes, and was declared elected.† The friends of Lee, failing in their favorite candidate, had reason to rejoice that so good a substitute was chosen; for Whatcoat was a man of saintly piety and mature wisdom.

The disappointment, if such it really was to Lee, did not dampen, for a moment, his cordiality to his brethren, or his generous zeal in their common cause. He says of the session, "I believe we never had so good a General Conference before. We had the greatest speaking, and the greatest union of affections, that we ever had on a like occasion."‡ And on the Sabbath on which his successful competitor was ordained, Lee was found preaching, as he had been wont years before, when stationed in that city, in the market-house, on Howard's Hill, with a power that shook the multitude as the tempest shakes the forest. The people "wept," and cried out, and "prayed most earnestly." A zealous brother-itinerant exhorted after him, as was customary in those days, and the exercises were prolonged still further with prayers for "those who were under conviction." He was subsequently informed by letter that seven persons had been converted through the instrumentality of that sermon.

The session having adjourned, Asbury, accompanied by Whatcoat, set out on his route towards the New England Conference, and Lee soon followed. On Thursday, 19th June, they were together at the New York Conference, which comprised then, as it still does, a large portion of western New England, and therefore properly pertains to our narrative; the paucity of the data respecting it leaves us, however, scarcely anything to record. One of the notable itinerants of that day, B. Hibbard, a New

* They were effectually corrected by Asbury himself, in the Conference, but not till after the election.

† See Short Hist. of the Methodists, Anno. 1800. Bangs (Hist of Meth., Anno 1800) gives but two ballotings. Lee is correct.

‡ Thrift's Mem. of Lee, chap. XVII. All subsequent quotations from Lee are from this work, unless otherwise indicated.

England man, writes: "We had a good time in our Conference. I thought all things went on well. But there was not so much life in the public meetings as I expected to find: yet what there was appeared to be very good; also much love and good-will was manifested among all the preachers. Bishop Asbury and Bishop Whatcoat presided, and certainly they were the best of men; they appeared to have the whole work at heart, and their whole hearts in the work. Their love for the preachers was manifest in a peculiar manner. Bishop Asbury was oldest in office, and had been longest with us. He sat as a father among his children, beloved by every one. When he prayed, he was as one conversing with a venerable friend, in which he seemed to have our interest at heart more than his own; and it encouraged us all to draw nigh to God. What a blessing to have godly men!" Forty preachers were present, more than half of whom were appointed to New England, — one-half the territory of the Conference being then within the Eastern States. Lee preached on the evening of the first day, with overpowering eloquence, chiefly to the members of the Conference. His text was Luke 9: 50: "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." He endeavored to "stir them up to continue in the work of the ministry." They needed thus to be encouraged and exhorted, for the privations and labors of their office were formidable beyond any parallel since the days of the apostles. They had no abiding city; with few exceptions, they were compelled to remain unmarried; they preached daily; they travelled incessantly; their annual allowance had been but sixty-four dollars, besides travelling expenses; and at this session a deficit of six hundred and ninety dollars, in the payment of these forty men, was reported. Their labors were among the poorest classes; and their accommodations, in their fatiguing journeys, were often of the poorest kind. Their lives were indeed a "fight for the faith," and they themselves "a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men." Lee could appropriately address them on their duties and their sufferings; for he stood in their midst an heroic example of both. They melted under his appeals; "it was a weeping time among the preachers," and

a "solemn effect" was produced on the assembly. "Glory be to God!" exclaims the devoted evangelist; "glory be to God for his goodness to me, and for his presence in the congregation!"

The Conference continued till Monday 23d. "We had," says Asbury, "some knotty subjects to talk over, which we did in great peace, plainness, and love. Tuesday and Saturday, we were closely confined to business."* On the Sabbath, liberal collections were taken towards the support of the preachers. Asbury preached from Rom. 12: 19, 20, 21, urging on the people the duty of sympathy with all men, but particularly with their suffering pastors. Whatcoat preached the ordination sermon in the afternoon, at the Bowery church. As usual at these early Conferences, a profound religious effect was produced by the session. Asbury writes on Tuesday, after the adjournment, "We have had a mighty stir in the Bowery church for two nights past till after midnight; perhaps twenty souls have found the Lord."

On Saturday 28th, Lee writes, "I left New York State, and rode into Connecticut, to Joseph Hawkins', in Nodd. At two o'clock, I preached on Luke 11: 28. I had a small congregation, and they were very tender, and some of them wept heartily. I talked to several persons about their souls, after I was done preaching: some of them were not so engaged as they used to be when I was in these parts before; they promised me, with tears in their eyes, that they would try to be more engaged in future. I then rode to Samuel S. Smith's, and stayed all night with him; he is a lawyer, and a preacher among the Methodists.

"*Tuesday, July 15th.* — I rode to Boston, but had no opportunity of preaching. The workmen were engaged in finishing off our meeting-house, and were to have it done in a little time."

He passed on to his endeared society at Lynn, where, in two days more, the New England Conference began its session.

Asbury and Whatcoat also departed from New York, for the New England Conference, on Saturday the 28th. The veteran bishop was worn out with labors and infirmities. He had offered his resignation at the late General Conference, on account of his

* Journals Anno 1800. All our future quotations from Asbury will be from his Journals, the dates corresponding with our own.

growing disabilities; but it was promptly refused by his brethren. He was compelled to change his old mode of travelling on horseback for a carriage; and, as his infirmities increased, it was necessary to help him in and out of his vehicle at the church doors, and support him to the pulpit, where also he was often under the necessity of sitting in a chair while preaching. With these growing disabilities, he needed repose; but he took it only in brief intervals. Before entering New England, he tarried for a few days' rest with his colleague at one of his old and favorite resorts, near the boundary. "We left the city," he writes, "and rode twenty-six miles, through heat and plagued by flies, to my old home, at the widow Sherwood's." He was saddened to learn, on his arrival, that one of the family, who, for her hospitable care of him in former visits, when he was suffering under illness, he calls his nurse, had "gone" — "Gone, I trust, to glory," he writes. Such bereavements deeply affected his sensitive spirit, and at the present period of his life they were not unfrequent in the wide circle of his travels and friendships. On Sabbath the 29th, he and Whatcoat preached at New Rochelle.

The next day they entered Connecticut. The notes of his progress are quite meagre, — almost destitute of any appreciable information; unsatisfactory, however, as they are, they should not be lost. "We came," he writes, "to Byram Bridge, and at Banks we had a crowded house, and a feeling time; the aged people were very attentive.

"*Tuesday, July 1st.*—In consequence of our circumlocutory motions, we have rode about fifty-five miles since we left the city of New York. We came to Stamford, where Brother Whatcoat gave a sermon on 'The faith and choice of Moses.' I had only time to speak a few words on Luke 19: 44.

"*Wednesday, 2nd.*— We rode on to Norwalk; stopped an hour at Brother Day's, and thence rode on to Fairfield. It was a cool day. We had an elegant view—the fields in full dress, laden with plenty — a distant view of Long Island and the Sound — the spires of steeples seen from distant hills—this country is one continuity of landscape. My mind is comforted, and drawn out in prayer. We had not time to feed nor rest. It was with some

exertion we came in time to Joseph Hall's, at Poquohak. After we got a little refreshment and rest, I gave them a short discourse on Luke 10 : 2. Strength and time failed me, and I could not finish and apply as I wished.

"*Thursday*, 3*d.* — We came to Stratford, and stopped at Brother Wheeler's.

"*Friday*, 4*th.* — The weather is damp, and very warm. We came on to New Haven, where they were celebrating the fourth of July. Bishop Whatcoat preached in the Sandiminian meeting-house, purchased by the Methodists.

"*Saturday*, 5*th.* — We rode, through excessive heat, over rocks and hills, to North Bristol, twenty miles. I discoursed, with some liberty, on Acts 26 : 18.

"*Sabbath day*, 6*th.* — We rode six miles to Punsit's new meeting-house. A revival of religion has begun here; a dozen souls have professed to find the Lord, several young people are under gracious visitations, and the aged are exceedingly cheered at the prospect. Bishop Whatcoat preached in the morning, and in the evening I made some improvement from 1 Peter 2 : 11, 12; after which we administered the sacrament. We were engaged five hours in public exercises; the day was very warm. We have travelled, since last Saturday week, one hundred and forty miles.

"*Monday*, 7*th.* — We rode sixteen miles to Hadley. The day was awfully warm until one o'clock, when a gust came up of wind and rain; we ran from house to house, and escaped being much wet; we stopped at Mr. Wood's. Tuesday we rode on to New London; twenty miles of the way the roads were exceeding rocky. My soul was kept in peace, but under great temptations of various kinds. We crossed Connecticut river at Chapman's Ferry, near old Haddam. Where the roads here are improved, they are made for ages, and are much superior to those in the south or west."

On Tuesday, 8th, they were at New London, and refreshed the young society there by sermons in their new chapel, Bishop Whatcoat proclaiming to them that "with Him is plenteous redemption," and Asbury proving to them that "Christ is the

author of salvation to all them that obey Him." They passed up to Norwich Landing, on the 10th. No Methodist chapel had yet been erected there, but the hospitalities of a kindred church were tendered to the apostolic travellers; they were admitted into the Protestant Episcopal chapel, which Asbury describes as neat and elegant. His heart warmed under the kindness, and he preached with "uncommon liberty," declaring "that unto you first God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Thence they passed to Norwich town, where Whatcoat preached. The weary Itinerants entertained themselves on their route with the beauty of the landscapes, and the contrasts which New England everywhere offered to the condition of the other states. "We had a most agreeable ride on the turnpike road, the country upon each side beautifully smiling with variety and plenty."

Friday, 11th, they were at Preston, on their way towards Rhode Island, and were "kindly entertained at Isaac Herrick's." It was "the height of rye harvest," yet the unusual course of these wandering evangelists excited the public interest, and drew out a large assembly, to whom Asbury published "the *great salvation*," being "greatly led out" on the subject. "I was refreshed," he says, "in soul and body, and rode on in the evening to Nathan Herrick's." As they advanced, they were more and more interested in the "simplicity and frugality of New England life." Asbury particularly commends the New England woman as "a mother, mistress, maid, and wife." — "She seeth to her own house, parlor, kitchen, and dairy; here are no noisy negroes, running and lounging."

On Saturday, 12th, they passed through Plainfield, into Rhode Island. After a fatiguing journey, in excessive heat, and over difficult roads, "we wandered," writes Asbury, "a mile or two out of our way, and had to pay for it by going a cross path; we made it twenty-six miles to General Lippett's. The general hath built a neat chapel for the use of the Methodist Episcopal church near his house."

General Lippett, of Cranston, R. I., was one of the few among the higher classes in New England who had adopted the doctrines of Methodism. His wealth was liberally expended for its

promotion. He erected, at his own expense, and on his own premises, a chapel for the accommodation of the small church which had been formed among his neighbors. His mansion was always open to receive the travelling preachers, and became one of their most frequented and most comfortable homes; and its ample accommodations were hospitably afforded, as we have seen in our former volume, to the large assemblies which were brought together by the Quarterly Conferences of those days, as many as fifty persons being entertained at once with dinner by its generous host on such occasions, and as many as thirty lodged; the large-hearted lady of the general kept always in readiness at least fifteen good spare beds. The estate, with its chapel, is still maintained by his son, who entertains his father's generous sympathies with the cause of Methodism.

Asbury and his colleague tarried in this comfortable retreat over the Sabbath, — not, however, in idleness. Whatcoat preached in the new chapel in the morning; and Asbury, though suffering from an attack of illness during the preceding night, addressed them in the afternoon from Exod. 20 : 24 — "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." "It was a feeling time," he writes; "although I was very unwell all the day, I could not stand back from duty."

They hastened away, the next day, for the Lynn Conference. "Monday, 14th," he writes, "we came on our way to Boston, through Providence; here we did not stop, — the time is not yet come. We stopped to feed at a house that was not very agreeable to me, and I was glad to come off without dining. We came to Deacon Stanley's, at Attleborough, where we took some refreshment, and reached Mr. Guild's, and took lodging.

"*Massachusetts, Tuesday* 15*th.* — We came through Wrentham, Walpole, Dedham and Roxbury, to Boston; it was a damp day, with an easterly wind, unfriendly to my breast. As they were about finishing our church, we could not preach in it. We made our home at Edward Haynes', late from England, where we had most agreeable accommodations after our toil."

On Thursday, the 17th, they reached Lynn, where the preachers were mostly gathered for the Conference, which was to begin on the following morning.

CHAPTER III.

THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF 1800.

Lynn. — Its First Chapel. — The Conference. — Notices of Character. — Whatcoat. — The Roll. — Clerical Celibacy. — Examination of Character. — Examples. — Finances. — Success.

On the morning of Friday, July 18th, 1800, began the first regular session of the New England Conference. Several irregular sessions had occurred in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine, during the preceding ten years; but the New England appointments were now for the first time definitively organized into an Annual Conference, by the authority of the General Conference.

The session was opened by Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat, in the new Methodist chapel of Lynn, — a village beautifully located on the sea-coast, ten miles north of Boston, and of which Asbury predicted, nine years before, that "Here we shall make a firm stand, and from this central point, from Lynn, shall the light of Methodism radiate through the state;" a prophecy which had now been fulfilled, for from Lynn, as his head-quarters, did Lee, down to the period of this Conference, go forth ever and anon himself, and send forth his assistant laborers, into not only Massachusetts, but New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island, until Methodism was permanently founded in all those states. Lynn itself has not only multiplied sevenfold its Methodist places of worship, and given to the church more than a score of travelling and local preachers, but has the peculiar and signal honors of having been the locality of the *first Methodist society* and the *first Methodist chapel* of the commonwealth; of the first irregular, as well as the first regular, *New England Conference;* and the birth-place of the *first native Methodist preacher* of the Eastern States.

The chapel in which the Conference of 1800 convened had been erected nearly ten years; but it was thrown up in haste, being dedicated in five days after it was framed, and occupied in less than two weeks after its foundation was laid. It remained at this date quite an inferior and incomplete structure. Nearly a hundred warm-hearted Methodists, however, welcomed the devoted Itinerants to its humble altar, and to their bountiful homes.

Twenty-one members, Asbury informs us, were present. The estimate included himself and Whatcoat, and not the probationers, who were six in number. The records of the session — the first Conference records of New England — are yet extant. The roll presents names which have since become noted, and endeared throughout the church.

It would, we doubt not, be interesting, exceedingly interesting, to the Methodist whose eye now rests on these lines, to be more fully introduced to this first regular assembly of the fathers of his church, the veterans who brought among our families the benign and vital theology of Methodism; for the founders of what American religious sect have left behind them more heroic reminiscences, or more endearing sympathies, than these self-sacrificing and apostolic men? A half-century has, however, passed away since they met; only a scattered few of them, infirm and in retired life, await the call to rejoin their departed fellow-laborers; but one (Daniel Webb), we believe, remains in active service; and the data of this period, whether recorded or remembered, are too imperfect to be composed into any satisfactory historic picture. Still, the surviving witnesses of this session delight in recalling the truly great men who sat in it. Most of them we have noticed in our preceding volume.

Asbury, not yet very aged, but wrinkled and debilitated by cares and labors, was present, guiding the proceedings with his rare sagacity, and discriminating, with the skill of a Lavater, the characters of men presented before him for the responsibilities of the ministry.*

* Asbury was noted, among the preachers, for an almost infallible judgment of men's characters from their physiognomy and bearing, and for the independence with which he made known such estimates.

Lee was there, frequently relieving the drudgery of business with his genial humor and apt repartee, which were not unmixed with the devoutest utterances of a humble though cheerful piety.

Pickering sat amidst the group, a young man observed for his personal beauty. He was blooming with health, his hair flowing in curls upon his shoulders; and his remarks, very seldom made, were noticeable for their laconic significance and point.

Timothy Merritt, though quite youthful, being but about twenty-five years old, gave eminent promise among them, both of piety and theological ability.

Beauchamp was there, — a man of the noblest style of intellect, who had come from the banks of the Monongahela to the help of the New England evangelists, and who stood in such estimation that he lacked but two votes, in the General Conference of 1823, of an election to the episcopal office. There, also, were Joshua Taylor, benign and beloved; Joseph Snelling, overflowing with amiability, and the first Methodist preacher raised up in Boston; John Finnegan, full of Irish heartiness and quaintness, and an indomitable laborer; Epaphras Kibby, only twenty-three years old, and but two years in the ministry, yet strong in the promise of a brilliant and original mind, which subsequently rendered him one of the most popular preachers of the connection; and Daniel Webb, "a man of unblemished character," * said his brethren of the time, and characterized by the direct pertinency of his remarks in the Conference.

Elijah R. Sabin, also, though not a member, was present, as a probationer, — a man of sorrows, but "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," the traces of whose usefulness are found all over New England, and whose powerful but humble spirit, after a life of sorest conflict, passed away triumphantly as in a chariot of fire.

Dr. Thomas Sargeant, a man alike of superb mind and person, and recently from the Middle States, and Joshua Wells, one of the strong men of the times, who still survives, the oldest Methodist preacher of the nation, sat amidst them.

Whatcoat, the new bishop, was a prominent object of interest

* MS. Records of the Conference.

to both preachers and people. He had never been among them before, and he came now with not only the fresh honors of his office upon him, but with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. He attended all the New England sessions regularly during four years, and was always received with heart-felt regard, and even reverence, notwithstanding he had been the competitor of Lee, their favorite candidate for the episcopal office. He was advanced in life, being the senior of Asbury by nine or ten years. He was venerable in person, and dignified by a simplicity and sobriety, and an unction of piety which commanded universal regard. For thirty-nine years, down to the time of this Conference, he had been walking with God, in the enjoyment of "entire sanctification;" and his uniform spirit and demeanor attested the genuineness of his experience. He had been thoroughly trained in practical Methodism, having been in the connection more than forty years, fifteen of which he spent under the guidance of its great founder, in England. He had participated in the organization of the American Methodist church, and had labored in its most important fields for sixteen years. He was a profound theologian, and an impressive, powerful preacher. His old colleagues speak with a reverent enthusiasm of his excellences; they call him an "apostolic man of God." "We will not," they say, "use many words to describe this almost inimitable man. So deeply serious! Who ever saw him trifling or light? Who ever heard him speak evil of any person? Nay, who ever heard him speak an idle word? Dead to envy, pride and praise; sober without sadness, cheerful without levity, careful without covetousness, and decent without pride! He died not possessed of property sufficient to have paid the expenses of his sickness and funeral, if a charge had been made; so dead was he to the world! Although he was not a man of deep erudition, yet probably he had as much learning as some of the apostles and primitive bishops, and doubtless sufficient for the work of the ministry. He was deeply read in the word of God. His knowledge in the Scripture was so great that one of his friends used to call him his concordance."*

* Minutes for 1807.

And of his profession of the sanctifying as well as justifying grace of God, they declare that "all that knew him well might say, if a man on earth possessed these blessings, surely it was Richard Whatcoat."

Such was Richard Whatcoat, a man of God, an indefatigable evangelist, an apostolic bishop, living the Gospel even better than he could preach it. Everywhere in New England where any traces of this good man's presence remain, they are redolent with the sanctity of his character.

We have but few intimations of the business of the session. Asbury says, "We had great peace and union." Ralph Williston, from the Middle States, acted as secretary. The old records give us the following list of members who were in attendance: Jesse Lee, George Pickering, Joshua Wells, Joshua Taylor, Joshua Hall, Andrew Nichols, William Beauchamp, Thomas F. Sargeant, Daniel Fidler, Ralph Williston, Timothy Merritt, John Finnegan, Joseph Snelling, Asa Heath, Epaphras Kibby, Daniel Webb, Reuben Hubbard, Comfort Smith, Truman Bishop. The first twelve were elders, the rest deacons. Three persons, Nathan Emory, Elijah R. Sabin and John Merrick, were continued on trial. Three were recommended by Quarterly Conferences to be received on trial. John Gove was recommended from Needham circuit, then an extensive field of labor, supplied by two preachers, now divided into numerous stations; Joseph Baker was recommended from the Kennebec circuit, in Maine; Daniel Ricker was also presented as a candidate, but was not received, the Conference considering that, being a married man, he could do better service to the church as a local preacher. Marriage was a serious impediment, in those days of long circuits and small salaries. The records of this session contain some curious references to the subject, which show that it was a question of no little deliberation and solicitude. Of one preacher, the secretary notes, that "He was recommended to this Conference as a proper candidate for the travelling ministry, but was rejected, he being obliged by his promise to marry a certain person at some future though uncertain period, and it being uncertain how long, should his life be protracted, he would

continue in the travelling order. It was agreed, that should he be received, and travel but a short time, he, then desisting, would wound the cause, but may be useful as a local preacher."

Even preachers previously received into the Itinerancy were called to account for incurring this formidable embarrassment, and the propriety of retaining them was discussed.

A usage exists in Methodist Conferences which is without a parallel, we believe, in any other ecclesiastical body. Every member, however venerable with piety and long service, is annually subjected to a sort of judicial examination; put under a virtual arrest, even though there may not be an intimation against his character. No exception is admitted, save that of the presiding officer, who is tried, in a similar manner, at the General Conference. The member thus under examination must stand frankly before all his assembled brethren, any and all of whom may question him, or animadvert on his conduct. His faults, or even mannerisms, are deemed proper subjects of comment, and brotherly counsel; if they amount to vices, the inquiry is converted into a formal trial, and adjudicated according to the laws of the church. This is a severe discipline, and might seem oppressive; but it is self-imposed, it has the sanction of primitive usage, it gives a peculiar confidence, and even tenderness, to the mutual relations of Methodist preachers, and has been very salutary in preserving the purity of the ministry. The records of 1800, though brief, contain some curious notes of these "examinations of character." They show the frankness, the simplicity and integrity, of our fathers.

Elijah R. Sabin, still on trial, was examined. He travelled the Needham circuit the preceding year, and being a zealous, determined man, had been persecuted and mobbed in some of the villages where he preached in the open air; he persisted nevertheless, though sometimes worsted by the mob, who silenced him with drum and fife. Some of his more fastidious brethren rebuked him in the Conference for his excessive zeal. Asbury, however, defended him, affirming that "this was the way Methodist preachers began, and we need warm hearts to carry the

work forward."* The secretary of the Conference records that he "was carefully examined respecting his moral character, gifts, grace and usefulness, and was judged to be a pious and useful preacher. Some remarks were made on his attempt to introduce field-preaching; but his zeal was applauded, and he was continued on trial."

Joshua Soule, now senior Bishop of the M. E. Church South, had commenced preaching under the Presiding Elder in Maine. He was not present; but, being on trial, his character was subjected to the usual examination. "A man of great talents, so called; and, though Brother Taylor, who spake concerning him, thought him in great danger of highmindedness, yet he, with others, judged that if Brother Soule continued humble and faithful, he would become a useful minister in our church and connection. Sustaining a good moral character, he is continued on trial."

Another member had ventured to marry in the preceding year. He was examined "respecting his character and present situation. Having been married but a short time, he observed that he could leave his wife with her parents, and take a station as a travelling minister. It was, however, suggested that an inconvenience would attend his being continued on trial, on account of his wife; that he would not be willing to go any great distance from her father's, and that it would be impracticable to give him a station near home; but a vote passed that he should be continued on trial — his moral character being unimpeachable."

The venerable Asa Heath still survives, in the State of Maine. The Record says of him: "Having travelled two years as a probationer, and having been a faithful and useful preacher, he, after due examination, was unanimously voted into the connection, and elected to the office of a deacon in our church."

Comfort Smith is said to "have travelled two years at his own expense," and is characterized as "a useful preacher," and as "sustaining a good moral character."

Epaphras Kibby "passed examination; and being accounted worthy, was unanimously voted into connection, and elected to the office of a deacon in our church."

* Mem. of Int. of Meth., p. 470.

Daniel Webb is pronounced "a man of unblemished character;" and, "being examined, was voted into connection, and elected to the Deacon's office."

John Finnegan was a unique character, excessive in his oddities, yet full of shrewd sense, and a really holy man — a sort of humorous devotee. "Bro. Finnegan," says the record, "is truly a man of piety and good morals, but possesses peculiarities; hence he is not so well received as some when he first goes on to his circuit; but though many things have been said respecting him, he was unanimously elected to the office of an elder in our church."

Testimony is borne to "the unblemished character" of young Timothy Merritt, and he was "unanimously elected to the office of elder."

"The elders were all examined," adds the secretary, "one by one, and counted worthy and useful men."

One melancholy item stands among these brief but significant notices. Stephen Hull withdrew from the small pioneer band, following the example of his brother, Elias Hull, who had left them two years before. "The good Lord have mercy on him," say his brethren, in their record of the case. These brothers both became Congregational clergymen; but, like most others who have deserted our ministry for the greater ease or emolument of other positions, both were disappointed in their hopes, and one was "expelled from his new communion on charges of grave delinquency." *

The Conference records contain also an account of the moneys received by the members present. The early Methodist preachers emphatically offered the Gospel to the people "without money and without price." The word "allowance" had been substituted in their Book of Discipline for the term "salary." They did not, and do not now, stipulate with their congregations by any binding contract for a definite remuneration; and though the Discipline specifies the amount of their "allowance," it is not received, on an average, in one-half the appointments, and no subsequent claim on the society remains when the amount

* Mem. of Int. of Meth., p. 340.

fails. Down to 1800, the receipts of each member were reported at the Conference, and after deducting his "quarterage," the surplus went towards equalizing as far as possible the deficit of his fellow-laborers. Even private presents, whether in clothing or money, were required to be reported and estimated in the apportionment. These self-sacrificing men were as one family in those days of privation, and what little they had, they had in common; a fact which is as noble an illustration of their character as it is a painful proof of their sufferings. At the General Conference of 1800, this rule was altered so far as to exempt private donations from the estimate. Hitherto the "allowance" had been $64, besides travelling expenses; but the same General Conference raised it to $80, and allowed an equal amount for the wife or widow of the preacher, as also $16 for each child under seven years, and $24 for each over seven and under fourteen, — no provision being made for children after the latter age.* As the General Conference at which these amendments were made had just been held, we suppose the allowances reported at the present Conference were rated according to the old rule. Hardly more than one-half of the members present had received the pittance of $64. George Pickering's receipts amounted to $47; Joseph Snelling's, $38; Joshua Soule's, $55; John Merrick's, $42; John Jones', $31.

Some of the members were not only deficient in their quarterage, but in their allowance for travelling expenses. Joshua Hall's aggregate deficit was $64; Joseph Snelling's, $74; John Merrick's, $21,— no small proportion of their whole allowance. A considerable amount was eked out of subscriptions and donations, so that the aggregate deficit was reduced to $72.25. These items are not without historical significance.

Such were the men of our ministry a half-century ago, and such their pecuniary reward. The receipts for their "travelling expenses" were quite small, as they usually started with the possession of a horse, and were entertained on their routes by their brethren. The actual cash received by them would not now be

* In 1816, the "allowance" of preachers, their wives and widows, was raised to $100 per annum. The amount for children was not changed.

considered sufficient for the annual cost of clothing alone, though that expense has been reduced at least one-fourth since their day. They had no resources for the purchase of books, except what they obtained by selling the denominational publications on their extended circuits. This they did largely, not only for the pecuniary advantage, but for the moral influence of their circulation. Many of them were thorough-going colporteurs, as well as preachers. "Be diligent in this work," Wesley had written to his Itinerants; "leave no stone unturned." The wandering evangelists carrying thus with them the works of Wesley, Fletcher, &c., read them on horseback, or at the hearths of the cabins of the wilderness, after the night sermon and the retirement of the family. If they read less, they perhaps studied more, than their successors; they followed the maxim of the classic author, "Read much, but read few books;" and they usually became adepts in the Holy Scriptures and theology generally.

Returns from the various circuits were reported during the session, and afforded much encouragement to the feeble but faithful band. It had been a year of wide-spread prosperity. A reformation had extended over the Bath and Union circuit, in Maine, under the tireless labors of the quaint John Finnegan; he reported a gain of fifty members. Vermont had witnessed, under the labors of Elijah Hedding, Joseph Mitchell, Joseph Sawyer, Joseph Crawford and Elijah Chichester, the most remarkable effects of the power of the Gospel yet known to her citizens; the truth "ran and was glorified" on each side of the Green Mountains, and *five hundred* persons were added to the Methodist societies of the state, while hundreds, converted through Methodist instrumentality, entered other communions. Joshua Hall and Truman Bishop had good reports from Rhode Island; their work had enlarged so much as to require the formation of a new circuit. In Connecticut the church had enjoyed a general outpouring of the Spirit. Shadrach Bostwick, who had been Presiding Elder of the New London district, was not present, but Asbury had been informed by a letter from him of the prosperity of the circuits under his care. He wrote: —

"The Lord has honored us with some of the most glorious

times since Conference, that I have seen in New England. At our Middle Haddam Quarterly Meeting, which was the first for this circuit this year, the Lord came down with mighty power. Many were struck, and fell from their seats prostrate upon the floor, crying in bitter agonies, some for converting, and others for sanctifying grace. It happened well that Bro. McCombs and myself had been formerly favored with such scenes in the south, and well knew what to do. The New London friends carried the flame into the city, and this brought on a quickening there; about sixteen members joined in one day, and many more in the circuit. Our second Quarterly Meeting for this circuit was at Canterbury, and a great time it was; two precious souls professed to be converted, and the meeting continued nearly all the Sabbath night. Upon the whole, this circuit in general is in a graciously prosperous way. Old Tolland circuit, that formal dry one, has taken the start. Our first Quarterly Meeting was at Hartford, five miles; the power of the Lord came down, and scarcely left a dry eye in the house; two or three professed to be converted, and five continued on their knees, begging for mercy, for near three hours. The work has spread rapidly in South Wilbraham; about twenty souls have been brought into liberty there, and still the Lord is working; and we have formed a little society there. Our second Quarterly Meeting in that circuit was in North Wilbraham chapel, and truly it was a time of joy and rejoicing. Three professed to be converted, and the whole congregation appeared to be melted into tears. The work has so increased and enlarged, that we have made a four weeks' circuit of it. We have had a precious Quarterly Meeting on Pomfret circuit; our prospects are encouraging in this circuit also; there have been some conversions and some additions there. Chesterfield circuit is in a far better way than it was last year; some revivals; and, at one of our Quarterly Meetings, two professed to be brought into liberty. Vershire circuit seems still travailing, and many precious souls are born into the kingdom. Our Quarterly Meetings have been rendered singularly useful there this year, and our friends seem much united, both to their preachers, discipline, one another, and to their Lord.

"I have the happiness to inform you, that a spirit of love and union, both to doctrine, discipline, and each other, subsists amongst all our preachers in this district. I have conversed freely and particularly with them, and I believe there is not a jarring string."*

The business of the Conference closed on Saturday, 19th of July. The preachers tarried in Lynn, however, during the Sabbath, when the ordination services took place amidst a large assembly of Methodists gathered from the neighboring appointments. Asbury addressed them from Matt. 9 : 36—38. "But when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd," &c. A long drought had prevailed, and "nature seemed as if she were about to droop and die." Much alarm existed among the husbandmen, and the preachers offered special prayer for a favorable change of the weather. "We addressed the throne of grace," says Asbury, "most fervently and solemnly, and had showers of blessings." While he preached, the "wind came up, and appeared to whirl round to every point;" the clouds gathered, and as the showers of grace were descending on the assembly, the rain fell copiously on the fields, and the multitude separated, rejoicing in what he calls "this signal instance of Divine goodness." The next day Asbury and Whatcoat were on their route to the south, and Lee the day following away to the north, preaching as usual by day and by night.

* We are indebted to David Creamer, Esq., of Baltimore, for this letter. It was published in a rare volume, entitled "Extracts of Letters containing some account of the work of God since the year 1800, written by the ministers and members of the M. E. Church to their Bishops. — New York : E. Cooper and Jno. Wilson, 1805."

CHAPTER IV.

ASBURY AND WHATCOAT ITINERATING IN NEW ENGLAND.

Boston. — Its first Methodist Chapel. — Waltham. — Benjamin Bemis. — Thompson, Connecticut. — Captain Jonathan Nicholls. — Methodism in Thompson. — Asbury and Whatcoat there. — They advance Westward. — Quarterly Meeting on Litchfield Circuit. — Garrettson. — Mrs. Catherine Garrettson. — The Garrettson Homestead.

THE Conference at Lynn having adjourned, the bishops and Lee pursued their respective routes with their usual rapidity, scattering the good seed as they went. On Monday, July 21st, 1800, Asbury and Whatcoat reached Boston, where they tarried two days, preaching in the "tabernacle," as Asbury calls it, — the new Methodist chapel, then "nearly finished." It was a very humble frame building, for a long time unpainted, and furnished with a pine pulpit, and rude benches for seats. Its site — now occupied by a goodly public school-house, and still revered by Boston Methodists — was on Hanover Avenue, then known as Methodist Alley. Though begun in 1795, it was not completed till the present year; "and now," say its old records, "the troubled and persecuted society found, in some degree, rest to their souls." In these circumstances, the venerable bishops of Methodism arrived among them, and were received with great rejoicings. Asbury preached on the day of their arrival. The little flock were beset with trials; they had been sorely persecuted, and, notwithstanding the qualified "degree of rest" mentioned in their records, they were yet often attacked by the rabble, in their humble chapel, and effectually interrupted in their worship. Many were converted among them, but the temptations to desert the lowly and contemned cause were strong. Asbury, therefore, addressed them from Heb. 3: 12—14. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one

another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." On the following day, the congregation assembled again, to hear Whatcoat. His devout spirit, anointed with the unction of grace, could not but share in the gladness and gratitude with which the brethren entered their nearly completed sanctuary; and he addressed them from Psalms 16 : 7 : — "Return unto thy rest, oh my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Such visits and addresses inspirited the struggling churches of those early days of trial, and left impressions which the few Methodists that remain from them retain with the interest with which the superannuated soldier recalls the campaigns of former years, and the cherished words of his commander.

On Wednesday, they rode thirteen miles to Waltham, and sought a brief season of repose amidst the beautiful rural retirement of the homestead of Benjamin Bemis, who was one of the first Methodists in that town, and whose mansion, sequestered among hills, and surrounded with fragrant orchards, became not only a sanctuary for the worship of his rustic neighbors, but the favorite home of the weary Itinerants of Methodism. He was a man of wealth, and his hospitalities seemed only to enhance his prosperity. Nearly all the great men of early New England Methodism were entertained beneath his roof, and proclaimed the "Glorious Gospel" in the shade of his trees, to the assembled yeomanry of the town. The conversion of many souls has consecrated the spot, and its old historical reminiscences still endear it to the Methodists of the Eastern States. Its devoted proprietor lived to enjoy a happy and sanctified old age; and died under its roof, in full hope of meeting his Itinerant brethren in heaven. It became the family residence of the venerable Pickering, who married the daughter of Bemis, and died triumphantly amidst its venerable associations.*

*The first Methodist church of Waltham (now the Weston society) was formed in the house of Mr. Bemis, and his own name was first on its class paper. Its chapel was erected more than fifty years ago, on a site adjoining Weston and Lincoln. The first class consisted of eight members, six of whom bore the name of Bemis. One of them

Word had been previously sent to Waltham of the proposed visit of the bishops, and a congregation awaited their arrival. Asbury proclaimed to them, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Rev. 21: 6, 7. The last verse was particularly applicable to their generous and pious host.

Fatigued by the business of the late Conference, and by previous travels, they needed rest; but early on the third day they resumed their journey, still weary and ill. "We came," writes Asbury, "through Needham, Sherburne and Holliston, and made it thirty miles, over Crook's Hills, through excessive heat. We had not time to stop to feed, as we had appointed meeting at Milford, where we arrived a little after one o'clock. I was obliged to let Brother Whatcoat ride in the carriage, or I fear he would have fainted. This made me low-spirited, and unfit to answer questions."

On the 26th, he writes, "We had to ride, through excessive warmth, thirty miles, to Thompson, Connecticut; but we took the day for it. We got to Capt. Nicholls' about six o'clock, where we have a house built, and some ground to set our feet upon. I have been of late powerfully tempted, and distressed in mind and body."

Capt. Jonathan Nicholls, in whose house he found a home here, was among the first friends of Methodism in Thompson, where his name will not soon be forgotten. The Conference of 1796 was held in his dwelling. The society in this town, organized by Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, had been in existence some six years, but was yet feeble. During a series of years, it had worshipped, first in an upper chamber of Capt. Benjamin Cargill's house, and subsequently in a spacious kitchen of Noah Perrin's,— names still familiar to the Methodists of that region. The "house" to which Asbury refers, as now "built," was com-

was Mary Bemis, the present venerable mistress of the homestead, who joined the society in her seventeenth year, and married Rev. Geo. Pickering two years afterwards. For an engraved view of this mansion, as it now appears, see the vignette of the "Memorials of the Introduction of Methodism into the Eastern States."

menced in 1797. Like the new chapel at Boston, it was but the shell of a building; but hundreds of souls, now in the temple not made with hands, commenced, at its altar, their course heavenward. So sacred did this old structure become to the Methodists of Thompson, that when their present elegant edifice superseded it, the primitive altar and several of the slips were incorporated, unpainted and unvarnished, into their new vestry, as precious memorials.

The people assembled on the next day after the arrival of the bishops, and Asbury ascended the rude pulpit, and preached to them from Mark 8: 35: — "And when he had called the people unto him, with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." He exhorted the young church to faithfulness, and "opened the distinguishing conditions of discipleship, — the denial of self in every temper and affection that is evil. They that seek to save their lives by denying Christ, shall lose soul and body; if it is through pride and shame, Christ will not dishonor himself by owning such in the day of judgment." The congregation assembled again in the afternoon, and listened to Whatcoat, while he exhorted them from "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace," &c.

On Monday, 28th, "we rode," writes Asbury, "sixteen miles, to the north end of Eastford. We have travelled nearly one hundred miles since our departure from Lynn. My subject, at Joseph Work's, was Matt. 5: 2: — "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil of you falsely, for my sake." We lodged at Nathan Palmer's. We came on to Coventry, twenty miles. We stopped at John Searles', and were exceedingly well accommodated, both man and horse.

"*Wednesday*, 30*th*. — We rode to Mr. Spencer's, in Hartford. My mind is at peace, but I have uncomfortable feelings in my body. Here I met Brothers Bostwick and Burroughs. We have a house built in Spencertown for the Lord; and now they are building one for the Lord's servants, — for the married preachers to live in who are sent to the circuit.

"*Thursday*, 31*st*. — Was excessively warm. We made it little less than thirty miles to Bristol; we stopped to feed our horses, but neglected ourselves. When we came to Samuel Smith's, we were nearly outdone by excessive heat and hunger. This day we crossed Connecticut river, and passed the cities of Hartford and Farmington."

They were now directing their course to the Quarterly Meeting of Litchfield circuit, where they expected to meet Freeborn Garrettson, the Presiding Elder of the district. Garrettson hailed them on the route. The next day, Saturday, August 2, the Quarterly Conference began, but at what town on the circuit we have not been able to ascertain. Asbury preached. He was reminded everywhere, in those days of trial, and especially in New England, of the many temptations which tended to divert the people from the infant and persecuted cause of Methodism, and therefore incessantly exhorted the little flocks, as he passed rapidly among them, to fidelity and perseverance. On this occasion, he admonished the converts of Litchfield circuit from St. Peter's words: — "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. 3: 17, 18. The soul of the preacher kindled with his theme, and the people received his admonitions with emotion and tears. On the next day, which, being the Sabbath, was the high festival of the occasion, "we had," writes Asbury, "a living Love Feast. Some from Waterbury were fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. We had a crowded congregation, a close day, and the house was shut up. In consequence of my breast being weak, I declined speaking in public. Bishop Whatcoat preached, and F. Garrettson exhorted. Our meeting began at eight o'clock in the morning, and continued, with a few minutes' intermission, until two in the afternoon; after which we came off, over dreadful roads, twelve miles, to Tarringford. I was pleased to see a house bought and fixed for Brothers Jocelyn and Batcheller, the stationed preachers of the circuit, and their wives."

Leaving the circuit preachers to conduct the services of the remainder of the day, they departed, in the afternoon, with Garrettson, for his homestead, at Rhinebeck, preaching at Goshen, Cornwall, Sharon, and other places on the route. Garrettson had married Miss Catherine Livingston, a daughter of Judge Livingston, and sister of the well-known chancellor, — a lady of rare accomplishments, a correspondent of Lady Washington, Mrs. Warren, and other distinguished women of our revolutionary epoch, and the personal friend of Washington, Hamilton, Jay, &c. The vigorous and thoughtful mind of this noble woman led her to discover in Methodism the sterling doctrines of the Gospel, and to embrace them courageously, notwithstanding any apparent incompatibility of the social character of the new sect with her own social position. She united her lot with that of the heroic Garrettson, and died, in 1849, after a pilgrimage of more than ninety-six years, which had been distinguished by one of the most beautiful developments of character, and most useful lives, known in the annals of the American church.* Their residence, on the eastern shore of the Hudson, still remains, amidst one of the most charming pictures of that beautiful scenery. It continues to be, as it was in Garrettson's day, a temple for the neighborhood, and an asylum of hospitality especially to Methodist preachers, who are always welcomed at its door with the benediction, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord." While Garrettson sheltered his family in this rural retreat, it was but his head-quarters, whither he resorted for occasional repose — not to escape from his duties. His stations were sometimes as remote from it as Philadelphia; and he retired permanently to it only when age compelled him to give up his ministerial travels. I have referred to this venerable mansion, so historically notable in the church, because it was long a sort of outpost of the New York Conference before the New England Methodist field, whence Asbury, Whatcoat, Garrettson, and other veterans, used to come forth on their ministerial incursions, and whither they returned for rest.

* For a fuller account of Mrs. Garrettson, see President Olin's sermon at her funeral, *Meth. Book Rooms, N. Y.*, 1851 · and "Sketches from the Study of a Superannuated Itinerant." *Peirce: Boston*, 1851.

The two bishops — exhausted by incessant preaching, and "not less than five hundred and fifty miles" riding since they entered New England, and between eighty and ninety miles within three days, with daily sermons — arrived at the favorite homestead, with grateful hearts, on Wednesday, 6th. They spent there several days. The tired Asbury says, "We regaled ourselves and horses upon the pleasant banks of the Hudson, where the passing and repassing of boats and small craft, perhaps fifty in a day, is a pleasant sight;" and of Garrettson's mansion he remarks, "He hath a beautiful land and water prospect, and a good, simply elegant, useful house, for God, his people and the family." On the twelfth, the apostolic men were away again on their route over the continent, preaching almost daily, as they went. We take reluctant leave of them till their return.

CHAPTER V.

LEE'S TRAVELS IN NEW ENGLAND IN 1800.

Lee's Journey northward. — Interview with the young Church at Monmouth. — Kent's Hill. — Hampden. — Josiah Newhall. — Mrs. Peckett. — Lower Canada. — St. Alban's. — Philip Embury. — Arrives at New York. — Review of his Labors.

LEE, when he left New England for the General Conference at Baltimore, in the preceding spring, had every reason to believe that he should return from Baltimore clothed with Episcopal powers, to superintend the great ecclesiastical work which he had now, for several years, been extending, both in the Southern and Eastern States, with an agency unequalled except by that of Asbury. His disappointment did not, as we have noticed, damp his zeal, nor the regards of his New England brethren. He was received at the Lynn Conference as the father of eastern Methodism.

The Conference having adjourned, Asbury and Whatcoat left, as we have seen, on Monday, the 21st of July, for the west and south. Lee departed the next day for the east and north. He designed to pass through the whole northern field into Canada, and back to New York by the Hudson; and as it was to be his last tour in New England, except a hasty visit, some eight years afterwards, it possesses an impressive interest, notwithstanding the very meagre notes of it which remain. He left Lynn alone, after dinner, but met at Beverly one of the preachers, Ralph Williston, who became his travelling companion through much of the rest of this journey. On Tuesday, the 29th, they rode "through Dover, and so out of New Hampshire, into the Province of Maine." By Tuesday, August 5th, they reached Monmouth, where he had, some years before, formed the first Methodist society of Maine. A new chapel had been erected for its accommodation; and the little band, still maintaining the

fellowship of the Gospel, in that then remote wilderness, received him with overflowing hearts and weeping eyes. He preached in the morning "at Mr. Blake's," some distance from the chapel, and had "a precious time." He describes the church as "a loving, happy people, who wept and rejoiced together," at hearing him once more; and his "own soul" he says, "was lost in love and praise." The Methodists there, he writes, "were all on fire" with Christian zeal and love. In the afternoon they assembled at their new chapel, to hear him again, when he addressed them some affecting farewell counsels, from 1 John 2: 28: — "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." "I had," he writes, "a very large congregation, and a happy time. The people were deeply affected, and the power of the Lord was in the midst of us. I was greatly revived at seeing many of my old friends, and many of my own spiritual children, who were engaged in religion.

"*Wednesday, 6th.* — I rode to Kent's Hill, in Readfield, and preached in our new meeting-house, to a large congregation of attentive hearers; they were much engaged with the Lord. I found my soul happy in God, and was much assisted in preaching. The friends stopped after meeting, and I spoke largely to the society by way of advice, and directed them how to conduct themselves as Christians. I also stopped the local preachers and exhorters, and drew a plan for them to hold meetings on the Sabbath, so as not to be idle, or in each other's way. I was closely engaged in the business till dark. I had a happy time amongst my old friends, and found them much more alive to God than they were when I left them. Our friends have built a good meeting-house in the place. I hope it will be a lasting blessing to the neighborhood.

"*Monday, 18th.* — I swam my horse across Penobscot river, and in Hampden meeting-house, at three o'clock, I preached on Luke 7: 50. I had a comfortable time in preaching to the people. As the meeting-house was not finished below stairs, I took the congregation into the gallery, and preached to them there. Then I took leave of my Penobscot friends, but not without pain-

ful sensations, as I thought it probable that I should never see them again. I then rode to Brother Isaac Davis', on Jordan Brook, and stayed all night with him.

"*Tuesday*, 19*th.* — I rode through to the Twenty-five Mile Pond, about twenty miles. When I first travelled this road, about seven years ago, there was no house in all the distance, and now there are nearly twenty. I got to John Chaise's, at the Twenty-five Mile Pond, about three o'clock, and at four o'clock I preached. We had a happy time together; saints and sinners felt the power of truth.

"*Saturday, September* 6*th.* — We set out early in the morning, and rode out to Connecticut river, at Northumberland meeting-house; there I left my travelling companion, and rode down the river, through Lancaster, Dolton, and into Littleton, where I was hailed and stopped by Josiah Newhall, an old acquaintance of mine, who had moved up into the country; I consented to stay all night with him, and was thankful to find a house, though but a small log cabin, where I could lay my head in peace; myself and horses were weary.* I was greatly pleased with that part of the country. It was generally level and rich land near the river, though most of the settlements were new. The mountains on both sides of the river, and the rising grounds at a distance, made a beautiful appearance. The country promises to be very fruitful, and I doubt not but religion will flourish in this country before long. Our preachers have lately formed a circuit there, called Landaff. I rode one hundred and forty-five miles, and preached six times, that week.

*Rev. Matthew Newhall, now in the Methodist ministry, and son of Josiah Newhall, says, "My father joined the first society in Lynn, Mass., in the spring of 1791, and has been a steadfast Methodist for almost sixty years. In 1793 he removed to New Hampshire, and in 1804 to Wethersfield, in Vermont. I have one brother and one sister; we were severally baptized by Jesse Lee, Ezekiel Cooper, and Shadrach Bostwick, — names familiar to many as the pioneers of Methodism in New England. My father's house has always been a welcome home for the faithful Itinerants. In olden times Methodists were few and far between; and there was reciprocal joy when the weary preacher returned from his ride to spend a short time with those who felt a deep interest for the salvation of souls. I might mention a long list of venerated names, from the days of Asbury, and Lee, that were our choice guests."—*Christian Advocate and Journal, April*, 1849.

"*Wednesday*, 10*th*.—I preached in Bradford. We had prayer-meeting at night. There I saw old sister Peckett, who formerly lived in Mr. Wesley's family, in London. She came to America, and settled where she now lives, in the State of Vermont. She was, for a great number of years, deprived of the privilege of hearing the Methodists preach, for we had no preacher in that part of the world. Yet the Lord spared her to see an answer to her many prayers, and the Gospel is now preached in her neighborhood by the Methodists, and the Lord has done wonders by their ministry already."

This venerable lady, now in heaven, had an important instrumentality in the introduction of Methodism into Vermont, as we shall hereafter see. Her house was a home for the first Methodist Itinerants who entered that state. She had not only been housekeeper to Wesley, but a "bandmate" of Miss Bosanquet, afterwards Mrs. Fletcher of Madely. She was deeply versed in Christian experience, and had in her rustic dwelling, amidst the wilderness of Vermont, most of the works of Wesley, and was thereby enabled to make known to her neighbors the peculiarities of the new denomination. Her religious influence was most salutary and manifest. Laban Clark, Martin Ruter, and others among our primitive ministry, who were raised up in Vermont, found her a mother in Israel, and received from her much of their early religious guidance. Her name is precious in our annals.

"On Saturday, 20th," continues Lee's Journal, "I rode very early in the morning, and went, through Fairfax, to St. Alban's, where I dined. Then through Swantown, and crossed Missisque river, and went through Highgate, to St. Ormond's, or Dunn's Patent, in Lower Canada, and put up at Peter Miller's, who was very kind. There I met with Peter Vannest, one of the preachers of the circuit. This was the first time I ever visited Lower Canada. I was charmed with the country; it was very rich and level, and healthy withal. I was then at Missisque Bay, on the north-east side of Lake Champlain. When I look back on my past travels, I am astonished at the

goodness of God towards me, in preserving my health, and keeping me from departing from him.

"*Sunday*, 21*st*. — At the Widow Hogle's, at eight o'clock in the morning, we held a Love Feast, and the young converts, as well as some old disciples, spoke very feelingly and freely of their experiences. I was truly happy in God, and wept much amongst my brethren. Then, at ten o'clock, I preached on Gen. 19 : 17. There was a great move amongst the people, and they wept in every part of the house. Then we administered the Lord's Supper, and our good God was pleased to meet us at his table, and we did sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus At one o'clock, I preached again, on Psa. 1 : 1. Some of the people were so overcome with the power of God that they fainted, or sunk down into the arms of their friends, or upon the floor. I then took leave of Canada and my Canada brethren, and rode back to the State of Vermont, and down to Church's, in St. Alban's; and at night I preached on Titus 2 : 12. I had a sweet time in preaching to the strange people, and they were remarkably attentive, and heard as though it had been for their lives. Then Brother Peter Vannest exhorted, with some life. We had a crowded house. I have seen no town in Vermont that appears to be so good for farmers as St. Alban's. I was glad to get to bed as soon as the people were dispersed, having rode eighteen miles, preached three times, held a Love Feast, and administered the Lord's Supper; and, withal, it was a wet day. Brother Peter Miller, after we left his house that day, came after us, to travel with me for a week. I was thankful for his company.

"*Saturday*, 27*th*. — We rode through Pawlet and Ruport, and then out of the State of Vermont, into the State of New York. I had been in Vermont eighteen days, including one day which I spent in Canada, and had preached twenty-three sermons. We then rode through Salem, to Peter Sweetzer's, where we stayed all night. On that plantation Philip Embury died, who was the first Methodist preacher who ever preached in New York. He was an Irishman by birth, and a house-joiner by trade. I heard that he died very happy in God."

He proceeded on, preaching in Cambridge, Troy, New Lebanon, and then in the State of Massachusetts, and Connecticut; on the 14th of October, he arrived in the city of New York, on which day he has the following remarks: "Here I will observe, that it was twelve weeks, to a day, from the time I left Lynn, near Boston, till I got to New York; in which time, I rode twelve hundred and sixty-three computed miles, and had preached eighty-nine sermons. In that tedious journey the Lord favored me, both in body and soul."

During this circuitous and rapid route, his preaching averaged more than one sermon a day; he was continually occupied also in social prayer and counsels with the infant churches. Much of his travelling was on new and rugged roads and through forests, and his entertainment was usually in log cabins. He now leaves New England, to reäppear but once more, and casually, within its limits, but to pursue on his evangelic course, with unabated heroism, in other fields. The foundations of Methodism had been laid by him in all the Eastern States: a large Conference had been organized; chapels had sprung up; more than fifty preachers were moving to and fro, proclaiming the "great salvation" through extended but organized circuits, and nearly six thousand converts were recorded on the roll of the church. A great moral work had been achieved, and a great man had left his stamp upon the ecclesiastical history of all New England. His name, until recently, has been but little noted beyond the pale of his own denomination; but his instrumentality is developing broader and broader results, as time elapses; and the future ecclesiastical historian of these Eastern States will place him among the foremost men of their religious annals.

CHAPTER VI.

APPOINTMENTS AND PREACHERS IN 1800—1.

Appointments. — Itinerant Corps for the Year. — Dr. Thomas F. Sargent. — His Conversion. — Commencement of his Ministry. — His Appointments. — His Character and Death. — Joshua Wells. — His Appointments. — Characteristics. — His Retirement from Public Life. — Henry Ryan. — His Appointments. — His Character. — Extraordinary Energy. — Enthusiasm. — Defection.

THE following were the appointments in New England for the ecclesiastical year 1800–1. George Pickering, *Presiding Elder*. *Warren and Greenwich*, Joseph Snelling and Solomon Langdon; *Sandwich*, Daniel Fiddler; *Rhode Island*, Joshua Hall; *Needham*, John Finnegan and Nathan Emery; *Boston*, Thomas F. Sargent; *Lynn and Marblehead*, Joshua Wells; *Merrimac*, Andrew Nichols; *Hawke*, Ralph Williston; *Provincetown*, John Merrick; *Nantucket*, William Beauchamp.

Joshua Taylor, *Presiding Elder*. *Bath and Union*, Timothy Merritt, Reuben Hubbard; *Norridgewock*, Daniel Webb; *Union River*, Joshua Soule; *Penobscot*, John Gone; *Portland*, Asa Heath; *Readfield*, Epaphras Kibby, Comfort C. Smith; *Bethel*, Joseph Baker.

John Brodhead *Presiding Elder*. *Tolland*, Abner Wood; *New London*, Daniel Brumly and Alexander McLane; *Pomfret*, Daniel Ostrander; *Chesterfield*, Henry Eames; *Wethersfield*, John Nichols; *Vershire*, Timothy Dewy; *Landaff*, Elijah R. Sabin.

Shadrach Bostwick, *Presiding Elder*. *Cambridge*, Ezekiel Canfield and Ebenezer Stevens; *Vergennes*, Henry Ryan and Robert Dyer; *Essex*, Peter Vannest; *Pittsfield and Whitingham*, Michael Coate and Joseph Mitchell; *Granville*, B. Hibbard and Truman Bishop.

The appointments on the first two of these Districts were made at the New England Conference; the others, though within

New England, were made at the New York Conference. The Districts to which the latter pertained were wholly within the Eastern States, except that of Shadrach Bostwick, which included Cambridge and Plattsburgh circuits, — the first partly, the second wholly, in the State of New York. To this list should be added the following circuits, which were on the New York District (then under the Presiding Eldership of the venerable Freeborn Garrettson), though in the State of Connecticut, viz: — *Redding*, Augustus Jocelyn; *Litchfield*, Aaron Hunt and Elijah Bachelor; *Middletown*, James Coleman and Elijah Searle.

The ministerial field of Methodism for the ecclesiastical year 1800—1801 comprehended then *four* Districts, and part of a fifth (one third of it, at least), *thirty-two* circuits and stations, and (including Garrettson, whose labors were largely within Connecticut) *fifty-eight* preachers.

Among the names of preachers who appeared the present year for the first time, in the list of the New England appointments, is that of Dr. Thomas F. Sargent. He was born April 10, 1776, in Frederick County, Maryland, of devout parents, who were early members of the Methodist Episcopal church, and trained their household in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In his eighteenth year, he received deep religious impressions in a prayer-meeting, and soon found "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." "His conversion," says his son, Rev. T. B. Sargent, "as described by himself in after years, was clear, sound and decided. There was a conviction of actual sin, and of the natural depravity which led to it, and the awful exposure to Divine wrath and endless ruin which follows it; godly sorrow working repentance towards God, with earnest prayer to God for mercy and grace, and other fruits meet for such repentance; faith in Christ as the amply sufficient Saviour of sinners, able and willing, by his atoning blood and Almighty Spirit, to save fully and eternally those who are without might or merit of their own; and in consequence of this act of faith, he received into his heart the promised Spirit as the *comforter*, witnessing his pardon and adoption, and thereby filling him with peace and joy, and as a *sanctifier*, working in him a death unto

sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, which produced in him holiness of heart and life."

This gracious change took place in 1793. He was immediately received into the Methodist Episcopal church, by the venerable Joshua Wells. Subsequently he believed himself called by the Holy Ghost to the ministry of the Word. His abilities for the responsible work were previously exercised and improved as an "Exhorter" in his native neighborhood. The cross was almost insupportable; and in his first attempt at preaching, which was occasioned near his home, by the unexpected absence of the circuit preacher, his trepidation was so great that it affected his sight, and the further end of the chapel seemed to have sunk several feet below the part on which he stood. He was blessed, however, with Divine assistance, and urged by his brethren to take courage, and go forth "enduring hardness," as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus. On continuing his labors as a local preacher, he was so succeeded, by the blessing of God, in the conversion of his hearers, that he resolved to give himself wholly to the work of the ministry; and accordingly left his father's house in 1794, by the call of the Presiding Elder, and travelled Talbot and Kent circuits, on the eastern shore of Maryland, on each of which he spent six weeks. He suffered severely from attacks of fever and ague on these circuits, and was transferred, for his relief, to the Philadelphia Conference, the next year, and appointed to Chester and Lancaster circuit. His name appears this year for the first time in the Minutes. His subsequent appointments were, in 1796, Carlisle circuit, which extended far up the Juniata, in Pennsylvania; 1797, Baltimore; 1798, Frederick, his native circuit; 1799, New York; 1800, Boston; 1801, Boston, Lynn, and Marblehead; 1802, New York; 1803, Philadelphia; 1804 and 1805, Baltimore; 1806 and 1807, Alexandria, D. C.; 1808, Georgetown, D. C.; from 1809 to 1812, Philadelphia. In 1813, he located, through domestic necessities. In 1824 he was received into the Philadelphia Conference as a supernumerary, and was appointed to the Union charge, in that city, till 1832, when he removed to Cincinnati. He was transferred to the Ohio Conference the next year, and appointed as a supernumerary in Cin-

cinnati, where, on the 29th of December, 1833, he fell in the pulpit under an apoplectic attack, and expired in the sanctuary.

He labored as an Itinerant preacher about twenty years; and when the magnitude of his family compelled him to locate, his sermons were scarcely less frequent than before. It is said that scarcely a week passed in which he did not perform some act of ministration in the charge to which he belonged. His acceptability, as a preacher, never abated; his services were in constant demand in Philadelphia, not only among the Methodis churches, but among Presbyterians, Baptists and Lutherans, who justly esteemed him as an excellent citizen, and a devoted minister of the Lord Jesus. His local influence in the city was extensive and salutary for Methodism. He was an officer of the "Bible Society of Philadelphia," from its origin till his removal to the west. He was president of the "Missionary Society of the Philadelphia Conference," from its foundation, and of the "Chartered Fund of the M. E. Church," during several years. He was a chief manager of the Conference, Sunday-school Society, president of the Trustees of the Union Church, and an officer of many other public institutions, in all of which his abilities and influence were invaluable. He was a delegate to the General Conference at five successive sessions, and took a prominent part in their deliberations. During his residence in Philadelphia, he practised as a physician with high respectability, having thoroughly studied that profession, some years before, in the University of Pennsylvania, under Bush, Physic, and other eminent professors. Though he commenced his ministry with but slight preparatory education, such was the natural vigor of his faculties, and the assiduity of his studies, that he acquired an extensive knowledge of general literature; and his acquaintance with theology and medicine was pronounced profound. His piety was cheerful, zealous and uniform. His pulpit discourses were characterized by variety of topics and illustrations, perspicuity of style, and the force of a genuine eloquence. His bearing was peculiarly dignified; his person tall and corpulent; his hair white with age; his features large, and expressive of manliness and benignity; his articulation distinct and sonorous.

We have mentioned the suddenness of his decease. His widow thus refers to it: — "For some weeks before the awful event, the Lord was drawing him very near to himself, and preparing him for his great change. You know he was always kind; but there was now an unusual kindness and tenderness to the children and myself; and uncommon fervor and unction attended his prayers, both in the family and in public. His preaching is much talked of, especially his Christmas morning sermon. His prayer, in the family, on that morning, will never be forgotten. O, my dear children, let us take comfort, and follow him, as he followed Christ! On Sabbath morning he rose as usual, and then breakfasted. Just before going to church, he observed that his breakfast did not set well: we went, however, and Brother Elliott preached, and your father made the concluding prayer, which was most comprehensive and delightful. He ate a very light dinner, and observed, that as he had to preach at night, he would not go out in the afternoon. I went, and took the four youngest children with me. When we returned, he was lying on the sofa. I said to him, 'Why, dear, I find you where I left you.' He replied, 'Yes; but I have not been here all the time. I have been preparing to preach. I wish you would hurry coffee; I think it will help my head, which aches.' We soon had coffee; he drank two cups, ate but little, and said, on rising from the table, 'Don't hurry yourselves; I'll go on to the meeting.'"*

Soon the melancholy tidings were brought to the door that he was taken sick in the church. The family hastened thither, but found him stretched on a pallet, below the pulpit, dead. He had been seized, while conducting the exercises, with apoplexy, and was suddenly translated from the church militant to that which is triumphant. His labors in New England are still remembered with interest by the few veteran Methodists who remain from that early period.

Another eminent name in this list of appointments is that of Joshua Wells. We have failed to obtain any satisfactory narrative of his life. The bare catalogue of his appointments,

* Letter to her son, Rev. T. B. Sargent.

however, speaks significantly of his long and useful labors. He joined the Itinerancy in the year 1789, and was sent to Bath circuit, Maryland. His subsequent circuits were, in 1790, Hartford; 1791, Calvert; 1792, Montgomery; 1793, Frederick; 1794, Rockingham; the next two years he was a presiding elder in the Baltimore Conference. The two years following, he was stationed in New York city, with Roberts and Beauchamp; and during his residence there, he became acquainted with the New England preachers, being sent to the Conference at North Wilbraham, Massachusetts, by Asbury, who was disabled by sickness on the route.* The next year, he was transferred to New England, and continued here three years, laboring at Boston, Lynn and Nantucket, respectively. Distant transferences were common in those days. In 1802, he returned to the Middle States, and was stationed in Baltimore, with Samuel Coate, Lawrence McCoombs, William Ryland, and other men venerable in our history. He continued in Baltimore two years, and in 1804 was removed to Philadelphia. He labored, during the ensuing six years, on Chestertown and Wilmington circuits, in Washington city, and on Baltimore and Hartford circuits. The next four years, he travelled Baltimore district, presiding over the labors of a host of notable men, among whom were Asa Shinn, William Ryland, Ezekiel Cooper, Henry Smith, Stephen G. Rozzel, Beverly Waugh, and Alfred Griffith. The four subsequent years he labored in Baltimore, and the years 1819 and 1820, in Alexandria, D. C. In 1821, he was returned among the "superannuated and worn-out preachers" of Baltimore Conference. He continues on the superannuated list till the present day, a venerated remnant of our primitive ministry, and the *oldest Methodist minister whose name stands on the roll of our Itinerancy.*

Mr. Wells is dignified and robust in person; his features are strongly marked, and yet benignant. His sermons were noted for their perspicuity and brevity, their masculine sense, clear and vigorous argumentation, and successful effect. He was distinguished as a disciplinarian. The only record of his life

* Lee's Memoirs, chap. xiv.

which we have met, consists of the following sentences: — "On the 9th of September, 1789, I believe God, in mercy, pardoned my sins, and converted my soul. From that time, I have been striving to serve the Lord, to be useful to my fellow-men, and to stand prepared to meet death triumphantly. In June, 1789, I commenced my itinerant labors, in which I travelled and suffered much; but have been encouraged by these and similar words, — 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.'" *

Since his "superannuation," Mr. Wells has, until within a few years, occupied a prominent place on the list of the local preachers' appointments, in the city and vicinity of Baltimore. His advanced years have required him to cease from even these occasional labors. He now lives, in almost entire seclusion and repose, at his country residence, a few miles from Baltimore, where his declining days are relieved by the abundant comforts of wealth, and the still more precious consolations of sanctified remembrances and hopes.

Henry Ryan joined the Conference this year, and was appointed to Vergennes circuit, which he travelled during two years. His subsequent appointments were, 1802, Fletcher, Vermont, with Elijah Hedding; 1803 and 1804, Plattsburg, New York; in 1805, he went to Upper Canada, to labor with the little band of eight preachers, who, under the presiding eldership of Samuel Coate, were founding Methodism in that wilderness country. He was associated with the devoted William Case, on the Bay of Quintie circuit, the present year, and the ensuing year sustained the labors of the circuit alone. In 1807, he travelled Long Point circuit; 1808 and 1809, Niagara; in 1810, 1811 and 1812, he superintended the Upper Canada district. No returns were made from Canada in the years 1813 and 1814, and we have therefore failed to trace his career during that interval; but, in 1815, he reäppears, as Presiding Elder of Lower Canada district; the next year he returned to Upper Canada, resuming the charge of its district, which he continued to superintend till 1820, when he was again transferred to the Lower Canada district. The following

* Letter of D. Creamer, Esq., of Baltimore, to the author.

year, he was appointed to the Bay of Quintie district, and continued in that laborious field till 1824, when he accepted an appointment as "Missionary to the Chippeway and Grand River Falls, and the new destitute settlements in those parts." In 1825, after a quarter of a century spent in the hardest fields of the Itinerancy, in New England and both Canadas, he was returned among the superannuated or worn-out preachers of the Canada Conference.

He was an Irishman by birth, and was characterized by an inextinguishable zeal and unfaltering energy. No difficulty could obstruct his course; he drove over his vast circuits, and still larger districts, preaching continually, and pressing on with all speed from one appointment to another. Neither the comforts nor the courtesies of life ever delayed him. When on Fletcher circuit, Vt., with Bishop Hedding, in 1802, their routes intersected at the junction of two roads, where, when they met, Ryan's usual salutation was, "Drive on, brother, — drive on! let us drive the devil out of the country!" and he was away for his next preaching place. In Canada his labors were Herculean; he achieved the work of half a score of men, and was instrumental in scattering the word of life through vast portions of that new country, when few other clergymen dared to venture among its wildernesses and privations. Not only did he labor gigantically, but he also suffered heroically from want, fatigue, bad roads, and the rigorous winters of those high latitudes. With his indomitable energy there was combined, as might be supposed, an erratic disposition; and in 1827 he withdrew from the connection, and afterwards founded the sect of the Ryanites, in Canada. We know nothing of his subsequent career. True to his national character, he had the energetic enthusiasm, without the sound prudence, which distinguished his associates of our elder ministry. Enthusiasm is an essential trait of any available form of religion; — when it is absent, religion is devitalized. Methodism, while it prompted enthusiasm, provided, like Popery, safe means upon which it could be expended. Directed into schemes of extraordinary activity and usefulness, it took a beneficent and heroic character, and was preserved from aber-

rations which would have been inevitable, if it had been less absorbingly employed. Hence, with the scarcely paralleled energy of primitive Methodism, doctrinal heresies were hardly known; the denomination was never disturbed by theological novelties, the wholesome divinity of the Anglican church and the systematic regimen of Wesley were steadfastly maintained. Even the zeal and energy of such men as Ryan found enough employment to absorb them in the practical demands of the Itinerancy; he "drives everything before him," was the remark of his colleagues; yet not till he retired into the ineffective ranks, and was released from labor, did he develop any questionable tendencies. He was, however, a truly heroic Evangelist, and we take leave of him with regret for the unfortunate conclusion of his indomitable career.

CHAPTER VII.

FURTHER NOTICES OF THE PREACHERS OF 1800—1.

Hibbard. — His early History. — Religious Experience. — Visit of a Methodist Preacher. — Begins to "exhort." — Usefulness. — Enters the Itinerancy. — Sufferings. — His Appointments. — His Death and Character. — Converted Dutchman. — Daniel Fiddler. — His Appointments. — His Death. — Freeborn Garrettson. — His Religious Experience. — Enters the Ministry. — Imprisonment. — Travels. — Character. — Death.

The peculiar genius of Methodism — its generous and intelligible theology, its warmth and enthusiasm, and energetic practical system — attracted to it men of earnest and original character, — men of large affections and restless enterprise; and yet, as we have remarked in the case of Henry Ryan, its stringent regimen regulated their energy, and preserved them from dangerous aberrations.

B. Hibbard, whose name appears in the New England appointments for this year, was one of these original and marked men. His peculiarities, usually humorous, and always kindly and devout, as well as forceful and useful, rendered him somewhat notable in his day. He has left memoirs of his arduous ministerial life, which will afford us occasional illustrations of our early denominational history.

He was born in Norwich, Conn., February 24, 1771, of parents who observed the early religious strictness of that commonwealth, and trained him in the doctrines of the Puritan faith. In very early life, his singularly constituted mind became absorbed in religious meditation; and notwithstanding a constitutional and exuberant flow of humor, he was plunged in profound melancholy. He needed more benign and accurate views of scriptural theology than his education afforded him. "I made it a practice," he writes, "to use such language in prayer as this, — 'O Lord, teach me my sins!' Then I would wait to have some sin brought to my thoughts: sometimes I had many

sins brought to my remembrance, for which I would ask pardon with weeping eyes, expressing my sincere sorrow for them; at other times when I said this short prayer, I would add, 'and help me to repent aright,' for I thought if I did not repent aright, I should be justly damned for unfaithfulness in repenting; and lest I should be guilty of 'using vain repetitions as the heathen do,' I would wait solemnly, with my mind intently fixed on God, for an answer. I read the Scriptures with greater attention than ever, and in private I would weep and mourn for my sins. I had some fears that I should not find mercy at last: nevertheless, I prayed heartily that the Lord would spare my life until I could completely repent. At one time I felt encouraged, that if I were faithful, I should repent enough by the time I was thirty years old; but after a while I began to see that my sins were greater than I had thought them to be, that I had not felt sorrow enough for them, and that I had not made sufficient confession to obtain pardon, and now I must go over with them again. Now the most of my nights I spent in weeping; my pillow and my shirt-collar were often wet with tears, and I would arise early to wash my face, for fear some one would discover that I had been crying, and ask me what was the matter." This mental agony increased fearfully, till it became a parallel almost to that under which the sturdy spirit of the author of the Pilgrim's Progress suffered. Not comprehending the doctrine of "*justification by faith*," he was engaged in a vain endeavor to wash away his sins by the tears of repentance alone; but, as he attempted to estimate the number and enormity of his offences, an almost hopeless period seemed necessary for the task. "I began to conclude," he says, "that I should not get through my repentance until I was fifty or sixty years old." As he ruminated over the dreary catalogue, he sunk into utter despair. "I found," he says, "to my unspeakable grief and dismay, that I was altogether unholy in my nature; my sins had corrupted every part, so that there was nothing in me that was good; I was a complete sink of sin and iniquity. I looked to see if there was no way to escape, — if God could not be just and have mercy on me: but no, — my sins were of that nature that they had made

my nature sinful. I cried out, when alone, 'O, wretch that I am! undone forever! all my hopes of obtaining mercy and getting to heaven at last are gone, and gone forever! and it is all just and right with God.' Still, it is a little mercy to me that I am not killed and damned outright; I may live here a while, but then, at last, I must be damned! and to pray for myself will do no good; there is no mercy for me; I can do nothing that will make amends for my sins; they are past, and cannot be recalled. O, wretch that I am! I have undone myself, and am undone forever. Well, what shall I do now? To pray for mercy for myself, is all in vain; though I feel no guilt for what I have done in praying and confessing my sins for some weeks past, yet to continue in this, now I see my end, will be a vain employment; it was just and right that I should pray and repent, that I might see my end. But now, what shall I do? To sin is the worst of all; I have done too much of that already; ah! that has been my undoing. I could say,

> Let me to some wild desert go,
> And find a peaceful home;
> Where storms of malice never blow,
> Temptations never come.

But that would be too good a place for me; I deserved to be damned; but this I could not pray for."

Such was in those days the experience of many an anxious mind, misguided by a theology the metaphysics of which obscure the clearest and most gracious light of the Divine promises. Such despondence must soon terminate in insanity, or a favorable reäction. Happily for young Hibbard, the latter was the case with him. On a Sabbath day, the quiet beauties of which looked more "dismal than a shroud," he read in his Bible of "the sufferings of Christ, and had an impression to go into secret and pray." His anguish followed him to his closet; but the impressions of the truths he had been reading were vivid. They embodied themselves, as in a vision, to his troubled mind; and he saw, as it were, "Jesus Christ at the right hand of God," looking down upon him with compassion. His despair gave way to faith; "and now," he writes, "I could see the

justice of God in showing mercy to me for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ; and not only to me, but to all that would come to him, forsaking their sins, and believing that his death and suffering were the only satisfactory sacrifice for sin. I felt a sudden sense of the impropriety of my offer to be damned for the good of others, though I had no condemnation for it; but the love of God in Christ, and of Christ in God, so completely overcame me, that I was all in tears, crying Glory! glory! glory! Beholding the glory of God by faith, was a rapturous sight! But soon it was suggested that I must open my eyes on creation; and feeling an ardent desire for company to encourage me in this worship of God, it appeared that, on opening my eyes, I should see some. I opened my eyes, therefore, while still on my knees; and behold! all nature was praising God. The sun and firmament, the trees, birds and beasts, all appeared stamped with the glory of God. I leaped from my kneeling posture, clapped my hands, and cried Glory! glory! glory! heaven and earth is full of thy glory! Then I sung,

Command his praise abroad,
And hymns of glory sing;
Jehovah is the Sovereign Lord,
The universal King.

"I understood now what I had read of the children singing hosannah to the Son of David, blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in the highest! After I had sung this verse two or three times over, I began another, putting my hands together, and saying, Now, O Lord, accept what I will sing to thee!

Might I enjoy the meanest place
Within thy house, oh God of grace!
No tents of ease nor thrones of power
Shall tempt my feet to leave thy door.

This verse I sung as my covenant with the Lord. I felt all submission, and all joy. I knew my sins were all forgiven me, and, if faithful, I should reign with God in glory."

Such was Hibbard's experience at twelve years of age, and such is but a specimen of the ordinary experience of the early Methodists, and, indeed, of most earnest minds. It is characterized by much ardent feeling, and distorted and often despondent views of the Divine method of human recovery, but also by profound scrupulousness, conscientious estimates of sin, and, at last, by transforming faith in Christ.

This happy state of mind continued till it was interrupted by the dogma of pre-reprobation, which was suggested to his meditations by the speculations of his neighbors; for it was then tenaciously held as an essential doctrine of the popular faith. From this terrible fallacy he at last recovered, but not till he had passed through sore mental conflicts, and received, as he supposed, special illuminations of the spirit on the subject. He at this time anticipated vividly the doctrines of Methodism, and waited prayerfully till their promulgation should reach his neighborhood. Several years, however, elapsed, before a Methodist Itinerant appeared there; and during this interval, he had been induced, by the example of Christians around him, and the opinions of the pastor of the village where he now resided, — who approved of dancing, — to attend balls, and to plunge into all the youthful gayeties of the vicinity. He thus lost the devout and peaceful frame of mind which he had reached through such an ordeal of mental suffering.

He continued in this backslidden state for some time, when, at last, a Methodist evangelist appeared in the village. His mind was reäwakened by the new preaching; and, passing through another inward conflict, similar to that already described, he emerged into a still clearer light, and settled habits of piety. He embraced heartily the doctrines of the new sect, though, as he had removed to Norway, Connecticut, and there were no Methodists within twenty miles of him, he did not yet join the communion. While waiting their arrival in the place of his new residence, he felt impressed with the anticipation that it might be his duty to join their humble ministry, and preach the great truths which sustained his own soul to his countrymen. He resolved to begin by "exhorting;" and he records

his first effort of the kind. It was a humble one, but characteristic and successful: —

"My first public exercises in the worship of God commenced while in Norway, immediately after my mind was fully satisfied that the Methodists were the people I should live to see. I determined to exhort and pray with all I could, so far as it appeared to me to be for the glory of God and the good of souls. One day I met with Jonathan Miller, in a wood; I asked him why he did not pray to God, and get his soul converted. He said the prayers of the wicked were an abomination to the Lord. I said, Yes; because they pray the Lord to depart from them, for they desire not the knowledge of his ways: and when invited to come to the Lord, they pray to be excused, because they have bought a farm or married a wife. These prayers are an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of a poor penitent sinner is, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' and this prayer is not an abomination. I then asked him if he would kneel down with me, and I would pray for him. He did so; and we both arose all bathed in tears. From this time he began to cry unto the Lord; and in about three weeks his burden of guilt was removed, and he began to praise the Lord."

He proceeded further, and held occasional social services in the houses of his neighbors: after two or three of these meetings, he found that many persons were awakened, and thirteen professed to be converted.

Removing from Norway to Hinsdale, he had more access to the Methodists, and now cast in his lot with them. Providential encouragements to devote himself more entirely to religious labors occurred: his wife, who had disliked somewhat his sturdy religious seriousness, became converted; he was induced, by peculiar circumstances, to discourse for the first time from a text at a tavern, and found afterwards that an old man was converted under the sermon, who, in a few months, died in hope; his step-mother was led by his guidance into the way of life. — "She never had a witness of her acceptance with God, but now stated to me her distress of mind. And we sat up all night, to weep and talk and pray together: and it pleased God to make her

strong in faith and joyful in hope. It was about two o'clock in the night when the Lord made her soul to rejoice in God her Saviour. Then we were so happy, we wanted no sleep, but only to rejoice in the Lord. Thus we spent all the night. Glory to God! this labor was sweet to my soul." He now labored more abundantly, and resolved to enter the Itinerant ministry; but he desponded under the consciousness of his defects. "Now my way was open; but my weakness almost discouraged me, at times: for I had not then heard the good effect my weak sermons had, so that I began to grow gloomy and discouraged, until I attended the Quarterly Meeting in Pittsfield. At the prayer-meeting in the evening, it was proposed to have a local preacher deliver us a sermon. He was a stranger to me; and as he appeared to be a solemn, gracious, good man, I was much pleased with the hope of a good time: but when he commenced his discourse, I perceived he was a weak brother. And as he progressed, I was confirmed that he was very weak; and before he was done, I concluded that he was weaker than I was; and surely, I thought, if I were as weak as he was, I would never attempt to preach again. Well, our meeting closed, and I went to my lodgings with a sad heart, to think no good was done that night. But next morning, to my surprise, I heard that five persons who heard our weak brother the night before were converted. I said nothing: but hid my face in my hands, and thought, truly these are thy marvellous works, oh Lord! Thou dost make use of things which are not to bring to nought things that are, and to *confound the mighty!* Well, I must take courage: and if I cannot shine in gifts, let me shine in humility, and adorn myself in a meek and quiet frame of mind, which is an ornament, in the sight of God, of great price."

We have been the more minute in these quotations, because they present an interesting illustration of the power and working of the religious sentiment, under Divine influence, in a robust but untutored mind. This process of spiritual experience resulted in the development of a beautiful moral character, full of religious sympathy, of affectionateness, of devout simplicity and sanctified zeal,—a zeal that labored mightily, and

endured most formidable hardships throughout a ministerial career of almost half a century.

In 1797 he was directed by the Presiding Elder to labor on Pittsfield circuit, Mass., which he travelled till the spring of 1798. He was then transferred to Granville circuit, Mass., until the Granville Conference of 1798, when he joined the regular Itinerant ministry, and was appointed to Duchess circuit, New York. While on the Pittsfield and Granville circuits, his labors were remarkably successful; more than one hundred persons were awakened; not a little persecution beset his course, but he became confirmed in his devotion to the work of the ministry. In 1799 he was sent to Cambridge circuit, which was chiefly in New York, but comprehended also several Vermont towns. He began now to experience some of the privations of our early Itinerancy. He had to remove his family, including three children, one hundred and fifty miles, among entire strangers, and without money to support them. Those were the days of the poverty of the church; during the preceding nine months he had received but eighty-four dollars, and for twenty months his salary had been one hundred and thirty-three dollars. Nearly all his own property had been expended. The exercises of his humble and devoted mind, under these accumulating trials, and recorded in his own simple language, afford an interesting example of his character.

"I looked at my call to this work to be of God. And I said in my heart, and to my dear wife, to God I will look for support. My wife encouraged me to suffer with patience. She often said, 'If we can do our duty to God here, and be a means of saving some souls, and get to heaven at last, all our sufferings will work together for our good.' Ah! thought I, you are a dear soul; what husband would not want to live at home, and enjoy the society of such a wife! But the Lord calls me to leave wife and children, — and for his sake I give all up."

He passed over his circuit, preaching daily, witnessing the conversion of souls, and seeking a home for his family; but finding none for many weeks, he writes:

"Well, thought I, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the

air have nests; but I have not even a log-house. I am now tasting of my Master's fare. He suffered this for the good of souls; and oh, what an honor, that I may suffer a little with my Master! So I went on cheerful, trusting in the Lord. We had refreshing seasons; many were awakened, and, I trust, converted. Our circuit, at that time, was five hundred miles around it; and for me to preach, as I did, sixty-three sermons in four weeks, and travel five hundred miles, was too hard. But I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me; for as my day was, so was my strength."

Such were the trials of our primitive preachers, — trials which either drove them from the field, or converted them into heroes; their successors may well blush to repine at their more fortunate lot. About three hundred persons were converted during his travels on Cambridge circuit. The indomitable Henry Ryan shared its labors, and they "pushed the battle to the gates." Violent persecutions opposed them. Hibbard writes,

"Brother Ryan was in good health and high spirits, for this great work. The persecution in Thurman's Patent, where we had lived, was truly grievous. Many young people, that experienced religion, were turned out of doors by their parents. Some of them were whipped cruelly; two young women were so whipped by their father, that the blood run down from their backs to their feet, and he then turned them out of doors, and they walked fifteen miles to a Methodist society. When they recovered of their wounds, some of our sisters informed me that they had many scars, some five inches long. Their two young brothers — one fourteen, and the other twelve years old — had both experienced religion, through the instrumentality of the Methodists, and suffered in like manner.

"It astonished me that a father of ten children, eight of whom had experienced religion, should drive six from his house, and whip these two boys, for no other crime, in reality, than because they worshipped God with the Methodists."

These persecuted children agreed to visit and pray with their enraged parent together, at a given time.

"With hearts all engaged in prayer for their father, they entered his house, and, in the most affectionate manner, made

known to him their tender regard for his precious soul. The power of God rested on them, insomuch that the old man was not able to answer them. He throwed himself upon the bed, and made a howling noise, while they prayed. The poor old man could not arise from it. Something rendered him helpless, insomuch that he was not able to whip his boys any more for worshipping God. He lived in this helpless state eight years afterwards. From this time, the persecution began to cease in this part of the circuit."

At the New York Conference of 1800, Mr. Hibbard was appointed to Granville circuit, Mass. His subsequent circuits were, 1801, Long Island; 1802, Duchess and Columbia, N. Y.; 1803–4, Duchess; 1805–6, Croton, N. Y., with a congenial colleague, the quaint John Finnegan; 1807–8, New Rochelle, N. Y. In 1809 he reëntered New England, and was the colleague of Isaac Condee, on Redding circuit. Their labors were unusually successful; extensive reformations prevailed, and about three hundred persons were converted. In 1810 he was on Courtland circuit, N. Y., with Ezekiel Canfield, and 1811–12 at Rhinebeck, N. Y. At the Conference of 1813, he was again returned to New England, and appointed to Pittsfield circuit, Mass. He was sent to this circuit also in 1814, but with the understanding that he should accept a chaplaincy in the army, if an opportunity occurred. He did so, and as war then raged on our northern frontier, he was appointed to a regiment, and was with our troops some time in the neighborhood of Boston.

"I believe," he writes, "I was instrumental of some good to the officers and soldiers. We had a very good understanding with each other, and contracted such an affection, that when we were discharged, and were taking leave of each other, our affections were manifested in a liberal flow of tears. And not long after I returned home, I had the satisfaction to hear of forty-three, who were in our regiment, that had experienced religion, and joined our society."

In 1815 he was sent to Litchfield circuit, Connecticut, and labored with more than even his usual success. About six

hundred persons, it is estimated, were converted, and as many joined the Congregational churches. An impulse was given to the cause of God in every direction, through the region of the circuit. In 1816 and 1817, he labored on Granville circuit; 1818, Chatham, N. Y.; 1819–20, New York city, with Aaron Hunt, Samuel Merwin, Laban Clark and Tobias Spicer; 1821, Petersburg, N. Y.; 1822, Dalton, N. Y. Having ruptured a blood-vessel while preaching in New York city, his health had declined so far, by this time, that he was compelled to retire into the ranks of the "superannuated or worn-out preachers," where he remained three years. In 1826 he was appointed to Petersburg; 1827–8, Salsbury; 1829, Tyringham.

Being still subject to inflammation of the lungs, and worn out with infirmities and years, he now returned to the superannuated ranks, where he continued till his death. He had labored in the church about fifty years, devotedly and successfully. He died in 1844, in great peace, and in the forty-sixth year of his itinerant ministry. "When asked by a son in the Gospel how he felt in view of death," he replied "My mind is calm as a summer eve;" and when asked by a son in the flesh if death had any terror, he answered "No, surely!"*

Methodism, while adapted to all classes, had peculiar adaptations to the unlettered and neglected masses. Its simple doctrines were intelligible to their comprehension, and its energetic economy reached them, in whatever recesses of obscurity. At the same time, its living agents were a providential counterpart to those adaptations. Many of its preachers seemed to have been raised up exclusively for the poor and illiterate; and the peculiarities which might have interfered with their usefulness in higher spheres secured them greater success among men of lowly life. Hibbard was an example of this remark. His memoirs abound in striking examples of the power of his ministry; even his humor, sanctified as it was, had its good agency; the hardest and the rudest characters yielded to his influence. It would not be deemed compatible with the dignity of history to

* Minutes, 1845.

narrate some of the incidents of his humble memoirs; but, as our pages pretend not to that dignity, but to a simple illustration of the primitive character and influence of Methodism, we insert an instance which exemplifies this influence over an untutored family. It is an account of the testimony of a converted Dutchman, given in a Love Feast, about the present period of our narrative. Hibbard writes:

"He said, 'Mine dear brethren, I want to tell you some mine experience. When de Metodists first came into dese parts, I tot I was doing bery well; for mine wife and I had two sons, Ned and Jim; and we had a good farm dat Neddy and I could work bery well, so I let Jim go out to work about fourteen miles off from home. But de Metodists come into our parts, and Neddy went to dare meeting, and he got converted, and I tot we should all be undone; so I told Ned he must not go to dese Metodist meetings, for so much praying and so much going to meeting would ruin us all. But Neddy said, "O fader, I must serve de Lord, and save my soul." But, I said, you must do de work too. So I gave him a hard stint on de day of dare meeting; but he work so hard dat he got his stint done, and went to de meeting, after all. While I set on my stoop and smoked mine pipe, I see him go up over de hill to de Metodist meeting, and I said to my wife Elizabet, We shall be undone, for our Ned will go to dese meetings; and she said, "What can we do?" Well, I said, den I will stint him harder; and so I did several times, when de meeting come. But Neddy worked hard, and sometimes he got some boys to help him, so dat he would go off to de meeting while I set on mine stoop and smoked mine pipe. I could see Ned go over de hill. I said, one day, O mine Got! what can I do? — dis boy will go to dese meetings, after all I can do. So when Ned come home, I said, Ned, you must leave off going to dese meetings, or I will send for Jim to come home, and turn you away. But Neddy said, "O fader, I must serve de Lord, and save my soul." Well, den, I will send for Jim: so I sent for Jim; and when he come home, den I heard he had been to de Metodist meeting, where he had lived, and he was converted too. And Ned and Jim both said, "O fader, we must

serve de Lord, and save our souls." But I said to mine wife, Dese Metodists must be wrong; da will undo us all, for da have got Ned and Jim both; I wish you would go to dare meeting, and you can see what is wrong; but Ned and Jim can't see it. So de next meeting-day de old woman went wid Ned and Jim. But I set on mine stoop and smoked mine pipe. But I said to mineself, I guess dese Metodists have got dare match, to get de old woman, and she will see what's wrong. So I smoked mine pipe, and lookt to see dem come back. By and by I see dem coming; and when da come near, I see de tears run down mine wife's face. Den I said, O mine Got! da have got de old woman too. I tot I am undone, for da have got Ned and Jim, and de old woman; and when da come on de stoop, mine wife said, "O we must not speak against dis people, for da are de people of Got." But I said noting, for I had not been to any of de meetings, so I was in great trouble. But in a few days after, I heard dat dere was a Presbyterian missionary going to preach a little ways off; so I tot I would go, for I tot it would not hurt anybody to go to his meeting; and I went wid Ned and Jim, and mine wife, and he preacht; but dere was noting done till after de meeting was over, and den dare was two young men in de toder room dat sung and prayed so good as anybody; and da prayed for dar old fader too. And many cried, and I tot da prayed bery well. After dis I was going out of de door to go home, and a woman said to me "Mr. ———, you must be a happy man, to have two such young men as dem dat prayed." I said, Was dat Ned and Jim? She said, "Yes." O, I felt so mad to tink da had prayed for me, and exposed me before all de people! But I said noting, but went home; and I went right to bed. But now mine mind was more troubled dan ever before, for I began to tink how wicked I was to stint poor Neddy so hard, and try to hinder him from saving his soul; but I said noting, and mine wife said noting; so I tried to go to sleep; but as soon as I shut mine eyes I could see Neddy going over de hill to go to his meeting, after he had done his hard stint, so tired and weary. Den I felt worse and worse; and by and by I groaned out, and mine wife axt me what's de matter. I said, I

believe I am dying. She said, "Shall I call up Ned and Jim?" I said, Yes. And Jim come to de bed, and said, "O fader, what is de matter?" I said, I believe I am dying. And he said, "Fader, shall I pray for you?" I said, O yes, and Neddy too. And glory be to Got! I believe he heard prayer; for tough I felt my sins like a mountain load to sink me down to hell, I cried, O Got! have mercy on me, a poor sinner! and by and by I feel someting run all over me, and split mine heart all to pieces; and I felt so humble and so loving, dat I rejoice and praise Got; and now I am resolved to serve Got wit Ned and Jim, and mine wife, and dese Metodists.'"

Hibbard was a very genial mind, humorous, amiable, though not learned, yet abounding in intelligence, fond of anecdote, and exceedingly happy in telling one; surprisingly apt in laconic remarks, richly endowed with the spirit of piety, ever ready for religious conversation, a thorough lover of his country, and staunchly republican in his politics; a tireless laborer in the pulpit, and one of the most useful men in our early annals. His love and devotion to the church were enthusiastic; he died soon after its division by the separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and it is said that that event broke his spirit and hastened his death.

Another veteran name on the New England list, of the present year, is that of Daniel Fiddler. He was born in New Jersey, and received the grace of God in his sixteenth year. His early religious experience seems to have been very definite and profound, and from the time of his conversion till his death he lost not the evidence of his acceptance with God. In 1789, when not seventeen years of age, he joined the Itinerant ministry. His appointment for that year does not appear in the Minutes. During the next four years, he travelled circuits which extended through the western sections of Virginia and Pennsylvania, into Ohio, a region which then lay on the western frontier of the nation. In 1794, he passed, by one of those distant transitions which were common in that day, to Nova Scotia. Here he continued to travel and labor, following in the footsteps of Garrettson, and enduring the privations and rigorous

climate of that but partially settled country, until the present year, when, on his way back to the Middle States, he paused to see the brethren at the Lynn Conference. There he met several fellow-laborers from his own section of the country, — Wells, Sargent, Lee, Pickering, Taylor, &c.,— and cast in his lot with them for a season. His hardships in the Provinces had fitted him for the scarcely less formidable difficulties of the New England field. He was appointed to Sandwich, Mass. In the year 1801, he travelled with John Finnegan on the Warren, Greenwich and Rhode Island circuit, which comprehended all the Methodist appointments in that state. In 1802, he resumed his route southward, and labored on Hartford circuit, Md. His subsequent appointments were in the Baltimore, New Jersey, and Philadelphia Conferences. He continued thus to travel to and fro, proclaiming the Gospel of the grace of God, down to the year 1830, when he entered the supernumerary ranks, after more than forty years' effective service, during which he endured the hardest trials of the Itinerancy, among the settlements of both the western and the north-eastern frontiers of the country. Notwithstanding his age and infirmities, the evangelic fire still burned in his bosom; and he continued to preach and labor, with increased acceptance, it is said, till within a few months of his death. He was a patriarch among his brethren of the New Jersey Conference, who thus speak of his end: —

"After having served the church, as a faithful and accredited minister, for more than half a century, he preached his last sermon Sabbath evening, January 30th, 1842, from Exod. 32: 18: — 'And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory.' While the venerable man of God was elucidating this impressive text of Scripture, and especially while he contemplated the manifested and unveiled glory of God, which the faithful finally shall enjoy,

> 'When the voyage of life 's at an end,
> The mortal affliction is past,'

his soul seemed to kindle into rapture, as he realized the period of his departure at hand. About this time his health began more rapidly to decline, and his mind, sympathizing consider-

ably with his failing tenement of clay, was bewildered, which made it difficult for him to fix his thoughts for any length of time on temporal subjects; but on the subject of religion he was clear, calm and dispassionate, up to the latest hour of his life.

"The last time he met with the people of God on earth for public worship, was about four weeks previous to his death, on a Quarterly Meeting occasion. It was peculiarly affecting to see him as he knelt, with solemn reverence, at the table of the Lord, and received in his trembling hand the affecting emblems of the broken body and shed blood of his Divine Redeemer. Indeed, he appeared to engage in all the religious exercises of that blessed Sabbath morning with more than ordinary interest and spiritual fervor. Many of the members of the church in Pemberton, N. J., will long remember the deep-toned feelings with which he spoke in the Love Feast of mercies past and present, and of his brightening prospect of a certain and glorious immortality. From this time he gradually failed, until the morning of the 27th of August, 1842, when he fell asleep in Jesus." *

Preëminent on the ministerial roll of this year, for both virtues and labors, is the name of Freeborn Garrettson. His prior travels in New England were but casual, and have been noticed in our preceding volume. His services the present year, as Presiding Elder, on a district one-third of the appointments of which lay within New England, bring him more fully within the range of our narrative. He was born in Maryland, in 1752. The influence of a devout mother gave his mind, as usual, an early religious bias; and when but twelve years of age, he was the subject of deep religious impressions.

Subsequently the Methodists, then a recent and much contemned people, came into the neighborhood of his residence. He saw Mr. Strawbridge, the founder of the denomination in Maryland, and heard other preachers with much interest, especially Bishop Asbury and George Shadford. His mind passed through a series of painful exercises, not unlike those which we have narrated respecting Hibbard. The records of

* Minutes, 1842–3.

religious experience, not only under the influence of Methodism, but of all genuine forms of Christianity, present a striking similarity in this respect, and suggest considerations of no little interest to the psychologist, as well as the theologian. The following is Garrettson's own account of his conversion: —

"In this state I continued till June, 1775. That blessed morning I shall never forget! In the night I went to bed as usual, and slept till daybreak: just as I awoke, I was alarmed by an awful voice, — 'Awake, sinner, for you are not prepared to die!' This was as strongly impressed on my mind as if it had been a human voice as loud as thunder. I was instantly smitten with conviction in a manner I had not been before. I started from my pillow, and cried out, Lord, have mercy on my soul! I passed the morning in solitude; and in the afternoon went out and heard a Methodist sermon. In sorrow I went, and in sorrow returned; and in sorrow the night passed away. On the Tuesday following, on my way home, being much distressed, I alighted from my horse in a lonely wood, and bowed my knees before the Lord: I sensibly felt two spirits striving with me. The good Spirit set forth to my inmost mind the beauties of religion; and I seemed almost ready to lay hold on my Saviour. Then would the enemy rise up on the other hand, and dress religion in as odious a garb as possible. My tender feelings abated, and my tears were gone; my heart was hard, but I continued on my knees in a kind of meditation; and at length addressed my Maker thus: Lord, spare me one year more, and by that time I can put my worldly affairs in such a train that I can serve thee. It seemed as if I felt the two spirits with me. The answer was, 'Now is the accepted time.' I then pleaded for six months, but was denied: one month, — no. I then asked for one week: the answer was, 'This is the time.' I mounted my horse with a hard, unbelieving heart, unwilling to submit to Jesus. O what a good God had I to deal with! I might in justice have been sent to hell. I had not rode a quarter of a mile, before the Lord met me powerfully with these words, 'These three years have I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree; and find none.' And then the following words were added, 'I have come once more to offer you life and salvation,

and it is the last time: choose or refuse.' I was instantly surrounded with a Divine power: heaven and hell were disclosed to my view, and life and death were set before me. I knew the very instant when I submitted to the Lord, and was willing that Christ should reign over me. I threw the reins of my bridle on my horse's neck, and putting my hands together, cried out, Lord, I submit! I was less than nothing in my own sight. The enmity of my heart was slain; the plan of salvation was open to me; I saw a beauty in the perfections of the Deity, and felt that power of faith and love that I had been a stranger to before."

His subsequent conduct showed the genuineness of his experience, and the scrupulousness of his renewed conscience. The property of his deceased father had devolved to him, including a number of slaves. Some time after the remarkable change we have recorded, his mind was deeply dejected, — he "was encompassed with darkness and the most severe distress." "I continued reading the Bible," he writes, "till eight; and then, under a sense of duty, called the family together for prayer. As I stood with a book in my hand, in the act of giving out a hymn, this thought powerfully struck my mind, 'It is not right for you to keep your fellow-creatures in bondage; you must let the oppressed go free.' I knew it to be that same blessed voice which had spoken to me before. Till then I had never suspected that the practice of slave-keeping was wrong; I had not read a book on the subject, nor been told so by any. I paused a minute, and then replied, 'Lord, the oppressed shall go free.' And I was as clear of them in my mind as if I had never owned one. I told them they did not belong to me, and that I did not desire their services without making them a compensation: I was now at liberty to proceed in worship. After singing, I kneeled to pray. Had I the tongue of an angel, I could not fully describe what I felt: all my dejection, and that melancholy gloom which preyed upon me, vanished in a moment, and a Divine sweetness ran through my whole frame."

Thus did his purified mind perceive the evil of slavery, not by a speculative process, but by that more certain spiritual intuition,

or instinct, if we may so call it, which religion imparts to the rectified heart. "I bless the Lord," he writes, "for leading me safely through such fiery trials! My late affliction of mind was for my good. It was God, not man, that taught me the impropriety of holding slaves, and I shall never be able to praise him enough for it. My very heart has bled, since that, for slaveholders, especially those who make a profession of religion; for I believe it to be a crying sin."

In the course of some months he began to address assemblies in neighboring villages; and at last, after severe mental conflicts, which arose from attempts to evade his duty, he obeyed the call of his ministerial brethren, and, furnishing himself with the usual Itinerant equipage of the day,—horse and saddle-bags,—went forth from a home which was abundant in resources and comforts, to pursue through his long life the pilgrim career of the Methodist travelling preacher.

He joined the Conference of 1775. The ensuing nine years he spent in almost incredible travels and sufferings, in Maryland, Virginia, both Carolinas, Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey. Such are the number and variety of marvellous incidents and adventures which marked his history during these few years, that we should be at a loss to know how to select from them, for our present sketch, were they relevant to it; but as they did not occur within the geographical scope of our narrative, we but refer to them. His labors were continual, with scarcely a day's intermission. His ministrations were often in such power as to prostrate to the earth large portions of his congregations. He was frequently mobbed, and struck down by the fists or clubs of enraged persecutors. He suffered imprisonment, and escaped several times plots against his life, attempted by poison or fire-arms. These hostilities were not occasioned by any severities of disposition or any indiscretions on his part, but by the extraordinary zeal and success of his labors among a community which had grown up with "the form of godliness, but denying the power." No man could be more placable or conciliatory than Garrettson. Overflowing with the charity and spiritual comfort of the Gospel, he was circled about, as it were,

with a halo of grace and benignity. His enemies, on fuller acquaintance with him, often relented under the charm of his cordial and cheerful spirit, and some of them became eminent adherents of the cause they had persecuted.

We cannot better illustrate his happy religious temper than by referring to an instance of the frequent and severe persecutions which attended him at this period. Immediately after escaping an attempt on his life, he was sent by a magistrate to prison. Here, with the floor for his bed, his saddle-bags for his pillow, and a cold east wind blowing through two open windows upon him, he lay down at night with "great consolation in the Lord," exclaiming, "Thy will be done." During his confinement he was "much drawn out in prayer, reading, writing and meditation." Asbury was himself in concealment at the house of a friend, some miles distant, and the imprisoned evangelist believed himself "strengthened and consoled by the prayers of his good friend," the apostolic bishop. The latter had sent him the noble letters of Rutherford, with which he beguiled the tedious days; and he was "blessed by the soul-comforting and strengthening letters which he received from pious friends." "The Lord," he says, "was remarkably good to me, so that I experienced a prison to be like a paradise; and I had a heart to pray for my worst enemies. My soul was so exceedingly happy, I scarcely knew how my days and nights passed away. The Bible was never sweeter to me. I never had a greater love to God's dear children. I never saw myself more unworthy. I never saw a greater beauty in the cross of Christ; for I thought I could, if required, go cheerfully to the stake in so good a cause. I was not at all surprised with the cheerfulness of the ancient martyrs, who were able in the flames to clap their glad hands. Sweet moments I had with my dear friends who came to the prison window. Many, both acquaintances and strangers, came to visit me from far and near, and I really believe I never was the means of doing more good for the time; for the country seemed to be much alarmed, and the Methodists among whom I had labored, to whom I had written many epistles, were much stirred up to pray for me."

On being released, he resumed immediately his indefatigable labors, and his persecutors were among the earliest to yield to the influence of the truth. "O how wonderfully," he writes, "did the people of Dorchester rage! but the word of the Lord spread through all that country, and hundreds, both white and black, have experienced the love of Jesus. Since that time I have preached to more than three thousand people in one congregation, not far from the place where I was imprisoned; and many of my worst enemies have bowed to the sceptre of our sovereign Lord."

Mr. Garrettson's ministerial life afforded him ample opportunities of "rejoicing in tribulation." After travelling but nine years, he says, in a letter to Wesley, "My lot has mostly been cast in new places, to form circuits, which much exposed me to persecution. Once I was imprisoned; twice beaten; left on the highway speechless and senseless (I must have gone into a world of spirits, had not God in mercy sent a good Samaritan, that bled, and took me to a friend's house); once shot at; guns and pistols presented at my breast; once delivered from an armed mob, in the dead time of night, on the highway, by a surprising flash of lightning; surrounded frequently by mobs; stoned frequently: I have had to escape for my life at dead time of night. O! shall I ever forget the Divine hand which has supported me?"

In 1784 Mr. Garrettson was present at the celebrated Christmas Conference, at which the M. E. church was organized; he had been an important agent in bringing about that important measure, and was one of the eleven who were ordained Elders, during the session. Hitherto the sacraments had not been administered in our churches. A vague relation was maintained by them to the Protestant Episcopal church, similar to that which existed between the Wesleyans and the English establishment. From the "Christmas Conference" dates our independent denominational history. Asbury was ordained a Superintendent or Bishop, and Presbyters were consecrated for the administration of the sacraments throughout the connection. These Elders being subsequently assigned to regular districts,

and endowed with additional administrative powers, were called Presiding Elders; and thence has descended to us an office which, though provided originally to meet a want that arose from the paucity of competent men to administer the sacraments, has become a permanent and universal feature in our ecclesiastical economy.

It was at the Christmas Conference that Garrettson volunteered his services as a missionary to Nova Scotia. A considerable number of Methodists were scattered through that province, — some from England, and some from the States, who had retired thither on the breaking out of the war of the Revolution; but, being destitute of regular pastors, they were as sheep without a shepherd. Garrettson, attended by a single ministerial companion, arrived, about the beginning of March, at Halifax, and entered immediately upon his labors, with his usual energy. He founded the Methodist society of that town. It originally consisted of but seven or eight members. He continued in Nova Scotia more than two years, laboring with unceasing diligence, and with much success; for, on his return to the States, there were about six hundred members in society, as the fruits of his ministry. In his semi-centenary sermon, delivered before the New York Conference, he remarked of his labors in this Province, — "I traversed the mountains and valleys, frequently on foot, with my knapsack on my back, guided by Indian paths in the wilderness, when it was not expedient to take a horse; and I had often to wade through morasses, half-leg-deep in mud and water; frequently satisfying my hunger with a piece of bread and pork from my knapsack, quenching my thirst from a brook, and resting my weary limbs on the leaves of the trees. Thanks be to God! he compensated me for all my toil; for many precious souls were awakened and converted to God."

He left Nova Scotia for Boston, April 10, 1787, and found in the New England metropolis three Methodists, remnants of a society formed there seventeen years before, by Mr. Boardman, one of Wesley's original missionaries to America, who had made a brief visit to that city. Garrettson, being an Arminian, was too much of a heretic to find admission to the city pulpits; but

he preached several sermons in private houses, and passed on to Providence and Newport, R. I., where he met a more cordial reception, and preached with good acceptance. He continued his route to the Baltimore Conference, and he was received with hearty greetings by his old fellow-laborers of the Middle States. It was anticipated that he would be appointed, at this session, Superintendent of the Methodist Church in the North American British Possessions. Wesley himself, who had corresponded with him while he was in Nova Scotia, had selected him for the office, and Dr. Coke brought intelligence of the design from England, and submitted the proposition to the Conference. The Conference favored at first, but did not finally make the appointment. Had it been effected, it is probable it would have assumed an Episcopal character, after the example of the American Superintendency; and its influence on the condition of Methodism in the Provinces would doubtless have been important. The value of an Episcopal Superintendency, in directing and energizing an extensive Itinerant system of evangelical labor, is manifest in the contrast between the growth of Methodism in the United States, on the one hand, and the British Possessions, on the other.

He was appointed, in 1787, Presiding Elder in the Baltimore Conference, and labored among the localities of his early ministry. In 1788, he passed, by the advice of Asbury, to the north, with the intention of entering New England as the pioneer of Methodism in the Eastern States.

The illness of the preacher stationed in New York city detained him there till the ensuing Conference, and thus prevented him from anticipating, by a single year, the mission of Jesse Lee. At the conference of 1789 he was appointed Presiding Elder of the New York district. Methodism had not extended further north than Westchester. His district was new, and was, indeed, to be yet founded. He had under his control twelve young preachers, and designated them to circuits along the Hudson as far northward as Lake Champlain; several of these routes of ministerial travel bordered on New England, and passed through towns in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Ver-

mont. The new ecclesiastical field had not been surveyed, and presented many formidable difficulties; he entered upon it, however, with apostolic devotion. "I gave myself," he writes, "to earnest prayer for direction. I knew that the Lord was with me. In the night season, in a dream, it seemed as if the whole country up the North river, as far as Lake Champlain, east and west, was open to my view. After the Conference adjourned, I requested the young men to meet me. Light seemed so reflected on my path that I gave them directions where to begin, and which way to form their circuits."

Lee entered Connecticut this year, and Garrettson was thus a coadjutor with him in the introduction of Methodism into the Eastern States; but not to such an extent as to impair the claim of the latter to the honorable distinction of being the founder of New England Methodism. Garrettson's district admitted of but occasional incursions into the east, whereas Lee entered fully into the new field, traversed all its states, and continued to labor within it, for about twelve years, till the church was permanently founded throughout its entire extent. Garrettson, however, contributed greatly to the early establishment of our cause along the western border of New England, from Long Island Sound to northern Vermont. The rapid travels and continual preaching of himself and his little band of twelve young men soon aroused the whole region along that border, and the vital doctrines of Methodism struck root in almost every town and village in their course. "Many houses," he writes, "and hands, and hearts, were opened; and before the commencement of the winter, we had several large circuits formed, and the most of the preachers were comfortably situated; sinners in a variety of places began to inquire what they should do to be saved. Satan and his children were much alarmed, and began on every hand to threaten us. Some said, 'They are good men:' others said, 'Nay, they are deceivers of the people.' A stranger from Vermont, on his way down the country, informed the people that we were spread all through the country through which he came. This sudden spread of our preachers caused some person to say, 'I know not from whence they all come, unless from the clouds.'

The power of the Lord attended the word, and a great reformation was seen among the people; and many were enabled to speak freely and feelingly of what God had done for their souls. My custom was to go around the district every three months. In going once around, I usually travelled about a thousand miles, and preached upward of a hundred sermons."

Such were the primitive champions of our cause; they "counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Garrettson was a member of the council of bishops and elders which met this year in Baltimore. In the spring of the ensuing year, he made a tour through New England, the chief incidents of which have been narrated in our preceding volume.* He preached in almost every town on his route, inspirited the churches, and scattered the word of life broadcast as he went through Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

At the New York Conference for 1791, his district was divided. He was appointed to that section of it which lay along the New England border, and his labors again contributed greatly to the outspread of Methodism in the Eastern States. He had been remarkably successful during the three years of his Presiding Eldership; about 2550 members had been received into the church, and the original four circuits of the district had increased to twelve. The district itself had comprehended nearly all the territory now included in the New York, New York East, and Troy Conferences.

In 1792 he travelled Albany district, which included portions of New England, and in 1793 Philadelphia district. It was in this year that he married Miss Catharine Livingston, of Rhinebeck. If ever a marriage was consecrated in heaven, this was; it introduced him to a circle of domestic enjoyments and sanctities, which, though they could not divert him from his accustomed Itinerant labors, afforded to them a felicitous relief, and tended not a little to the elevation of his already noble character.

* Memorials of the Introduction of Methodism, chap. v.

His subsequent appointments were, in 1797, New York district, which brought him again into New England; 1798, Albany district; 1799, New Jersey district; 1800–1804, New York district, again; 1804, Rhinebeck; 1805 and 1806, New York city; 1807, Conference missionary; 1808, Rhinebeck; 1809 and 1810, Conference missionary; 1811 to 1814, New York district; 1815, no appointment, at his own request; 1816, Conference missionary. At the Conference of 1817, he was returned on the supernumerary list, that he might be able to labor at large. In this relation to the Conference he continued the remainder of his life, extending his travels through most of New England and the Middle States, and scarcely abating his wonted exertions, notwithstanding the growing infirmities of age.

Few men — none, perhaps, except Asbury and Lee — labored more indefatigably, or made greater sacrifices for our cause, than Freeborn Garrettson. He fought its early and formidable battles, from South Carolina to Nova Scotia, and never with defeat. His spirit glowed with an inextinguishable zeal; and the privations, travels and fatigues, of more than fifty years spent in the Itinerant ministry, only augmented his devotion to the propagation of those great doctrines of the cross which Methodism had brought home to his own experience. The chief secret of his almost incredible labors is the fact that early in his life, while in North Carolina, he thoroughly consecrated himself to God, and received the blessing of entire sanctification. This great grace signalized his whole subsequent life; it was a favorite theme of his ministry, and some of his dying utterances were testimonies of its reality and blessedness.

Freeborn Garrettson possessed more than the usual intelligence of his fellow-laborers: he was a sound theologian; his style was ready and glowing, his expositions remarkably perspicuous and apt; his manner in the pulpit colloquial, ardent, pathetic, and often exultantly eloquent. In social life he was marked by a happy facility of manners, an unusually placable and sympathetic spirit, and sentiments of great liberality towards those who differed from him in religious opinions.

But notwithstanding his habitual and perhaps constitutional

liberality, his love of Methodism amounted almost to a passion. He believed it to be a re-development of the apostolic form of Christianity — a final missionary movement of the Gospel for the recovery of the world unto Christ; and his devotion to its propagation corresponded with his convictions of its importance. His regard for the system endeared to him its laborious agents, and a marked trait of his character was his "love of the brethren." Even his beautiful retreat at Rhinebeck seemed to him deficient in its requisite comforts, if there was not with him an Itinerant preacher to share his occasional repose amidst its shades. These intervals of rest were, however, usually very brief. It is to be hoped that there are many families as holy and as happy as that of the Garrettson homestead, but a more happy and more sanctified one could not be found; yet it was remarked by the friends of the veteran preacher that he soon became restless while enjoying its charming seclusion. His old associate and biographer, Dr. Bangs, remarks, "Here is the true secret whence originated that restlessness of spirit whenever he had been long at home. He felt that the vows of his God were upon him, and that he must perform them. Often, when I have been favored with a visit to his friendly and peaceful mansion, have I witnessed, even in the midst of everything calculated to make life desirable, the anxiety of his mind to be in the field, laboring for his Lord and Master."

The death of this venerable saint befitted such a life. While on a ministerial visit to New York, he was attacked with stranguary. He endured indescribable agonies, but triumphed over them all, and, at last, over death itself, by the strength of his faith. In the midst of his extreme sufferings, he exclaimed, "I shall be purified as by fire; I shall be made perfect through sufferings. It is all right, — not a pain too much!" Again he exclaimed, "I feel the perfect love of God in my soul!" When a friend inquired how he was, he replied, "I feel love and good will to all mankind; I see a beauty in all the works of God;" apparently not regarding the inquiry about his health as worthy of reference. His last distinct words, uttered while dying, were a sublime triumph of the departing soul, an anticipation of the song

of Heaven; they were "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty! Hallelujah! hallelujah!" The phrase "Glory, glory!" was whispered from his dying lips, as he clasped his hands, and raised his failing eyes, for the last time, towards heaven. "Just as the period of his departure approached, one of the preachers broke forth into prayer, — prayer so elevated, so holy, that it seemed to wrap the hearers above all sublunary consideration; and as he commended the dying saint into the hands of God, he prayed that the mantle of the departing patriarch might rest on his surviving brethren. His prayer seemed answered; — a Divine influence pervaded the apartment; two of the preachers almost sank to the floor, under a glorious sense of His presence who filleth immensity."*

Thus died Freeborn Garrettson, Sept. 26, 1827, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-second of his Itinerant ministry, some sixteen of which had been spent in appointments that comprehended large portions of the New England States. He looked with much hope on the religious prospects of these states. "Much good," he says, "was done; and I should not be surprised if New England should become the richest soil in the Union for Methodism." †

* Letter of Miss M. R. Garrettson to Rev. R. Reece. — *Life of Garrettson.*
† Semi-centenary Sermon, p. 23.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRIALS AND SUCCESSES OF 1800–1.

Privations of the Early Methodist Ministry. — Joshua Taylor. — Epaphras Kibby. — Sufferings and Triumphs in Maine. — Ebenezer Newhall. — Remarkable Reformation. — Peter Vannest in Vermont. — Rhode Island. — New Hampshire. — Sufferings and Successes in Granville Circuit. — Letters from Bostwick and Brodhead. — Numerical Results.

EXTENSIVE reformations, and also no inconsiderable sufferings, attended the labors of the present year. Some of the northern and eastern circuits reached far into the frontier wilderness, and even into Canada. The winters were rigorous, and the rough roads and forest paths were often rendered almost impassable by snow; while the entertainment of the weary Itinerant, at night, was usually in exposed log cabins. Our ministry of that day was, however, composed of men who "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." "Long rides and bad roads," says one of them, who travelled in Maine, — "crossing rivers without ferry-boats, buffeting storms, breaking roads, sleeping in open cabins and log huts, coarse and scanty fare, — all seemed to call out the energies of both soul and body."* Joshua Taylor superintended a vast district in the same state. A new and laborious circuit — Bethel — was added this year to the six which had before composed his charge; it extended up the Androscoggin river as far as the remotest habitations of white men. The privations and sufferings of the little band of travelling evangelists in this then comparatively unsettled country were incredible. But trials are the discipline that makes great men; and the names of most of them, Taylor, Mudge, Kibby, Webb, Soule, Merritt, are still notable in the church for heroic associations. They faltered not amidst their great trials, but spread the truth far and wide. "In the course of this year," writes

* MS. of Rev. Enoch Mudge.

Taylor, "I witnessed some blessed revivals of religion in different parts of the district."* Kibby especially had severe trials, but also signal success, on Readfield circuit, which took in the furthest settlement on Sandy river. Except a single Saturday in each month, he preached daily. He threaded the forests, by the aid of a guide, at first, and afterwards by marks on the trees; his horse was often dangerously lacerated in fording streams amidst the ice; the stars shone upon his slumbers through the roofs of the log cabins in which he sought shelter. But the truth spread like a flame over his circuit; a remarkable reformation began, under one of his sermons at Monmouth, and extended into many other towns; it reached Hallowell, and resulted in the introduction of Methodism there the present year, — not, however, without persecutions, and even the violence of mobs.

About this time, young Ebenezer F. Newhall, since become a veteran of our ministry, was teaching school in Thomaston. He had recently found the grace of God, and was now praying and exhorting, in his hours of leisure, from house to house; and aided much, in this manner, the few Itinerants who, at long intervals, passed through the neighborhood, proclaiming the Gospel. "I found," he writes, "in the place, a large unfinished meeting-house, but no settled minister. About three miles distant, there was Methodist preaching half the time, in a large hall. There I found a small society, and felt at home among them. Brother J. Taylor was the Presiding Elder, and Brothers Humphrey and Hubbard circuit preachers. With great delight and profit I heard the word from their consecrated lips. The people flocked to hear them, and many were converted. Pleasant and profitable were the seasons that I enjoyed in visiting from house to house, and recommending pure experimental religion to *all*. This was new doctrine to them; for election and reprobation had been taught there most rigidly. But great joy filled my heart, whilst I opened my Bible and showed them that *whosoever* calls upon God in humble prayer shall be saved: for the same God over all is rich in mercy unto all that call upon him; all are invited to look and live, and whosoever *will* may take of the waters of

* Letter to the author.

life *freely*. Glory to God! Amen." He relates an account of a remarkable religious interest which occurred among the Fox Islands, at the north of Penobscot Bay. "The facts were these: It was a new settlement, consisting of about thirty families. There was not a professor of religion among them, and the Sabbath was a day for visiting, doing up chores, &c. Yet the good spirit had not left them, for they manifested some conviction for sin. They said, ere long, one to another, 'We live too much like heathens; we were brought up to keep the Sabbath; let us meet on the Sabbath.' So they met, and took snuff, smoked tobacco, and talked about their cattle, farms, &c. But the Holy Spirit reproved them; and they said, 'We might as well be among our cattle and at work on our farms, as to meet here and think and talk about them as we do.' They then agreed to spend a portion of the time in reading the Bible and in singing. A few holy Sabbaths thus passed, and they felt convicted that taking snuff, chewing and smoking tobacco, were inconsistent with the worship of God; and they mutually agreed to lay them aside, at least when in meeting. After this they came together for several Sabbaths, and sat down in silence and wept; indeed, they could scarcely read or sing. On a certain day, when they sat weeping thus, one said, 'Neighbor, will you pray with us?' — 'No,' he replied, 'for I have no religion.' The inquiry went round, and a similar reply followed it. Their sighs and tears increased, till one kneeled down and began to cry for mercy; but he was not long alone, for the power of God moved upon the little congregation. They prayed: — the Lord heard, and sent down answers of peace; their sorrows were turned into joys, until there was not a family on the islands that had not shared in the glorious work. This was the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our sight!"

The laborers in New Hampshire and Vermont suffered much, but not without eminent success. Peter Vannest says of Essex circuit, afterwards Fletcher, Vt., "We had a good time all around the circuit. I baptized, by sprinkling, pouring and immersion, about four hundred persons. My work required me to cross Missisque river. When winter came, I was unable to

get my horse over the river, on account of the boat being sunk; I therefore left him with a friend, to bring to St. Alban's, a distance of about seventeen miles. I got over the river myself in a canoe, amidst the drift-ice. I travelled about one hundred miles on foot, and most of the way through the woods and deep snow, without a track, sometimes stepping into spring-holes up to my knees in mud and water: the snow would wear off the mud, but not dry my feet. Some part of my way was on the ice, which at that season covered Missisque Bay, where I found the water three or four inches deep; and being compelled to travel in shoes (having no boots), I had wet feet, of course. Thus I continued until I came to St. Alban's, where I found my horse, and so travelled on until the beginning of summer, when my horse died."* He continued through similar trials till the next session of the Conference, to which he had to travel four hundred miles on horseback, but bearing with him the cheering tidings of wide-spread revivals, and more than one hundred and twenty-five additions to the societies of his charge, besides numerous converts who were received into other communions.

Elijah Hedding, who was yet a stripling, labored this year under the direction of the Presiding Elder, with great usefulness, in various parts of Vermont. Joshua Hall, whose appointment was Rhode Island circuit, formed the first Methodist Class in Newport, R. I., and extending his travels to New Bedford, introduced Methodism into that city. Joseph Snelling and Solomon Langdon had much success on Warren circuit, R. I. It comprised some twenty appointments, in several of which a profound religious interest prevailed. The society at Cumberland was formed this year by Mr. Snelling, and reformations of much interest took place in Easton, Bridgewater, Swanzey and Fairfax. Of the latter place Snelling writes, "Many in this part of the Lord's vineyard have cause to remember the year 1800. It was like the year of Jubilee — a year of release; and, blessed be God! many went out free."† "The reformation," he remarks, "continued in different directions, and Zion's converts were multiplied."

* Christian Advocate, &c., Sept., 1850. † Memoir, Chap. III.

In New Hampshire, Methodism spread itself out in all directions; the circuits were doubled in number, and the membership increased more than three-fold.

Granville circuit, Mass., travelled this year by Hibbard and Ebenezer Washburn (the latter not yet a member of the Conference), was the scene of great trials and great triumphs. Hibbard says that when he went to the circuit his payment quarterly was but $5.84, besides travelling expenses. He had, meanwhile, to maintain his family, which was located some fifty miles distant from his field of labor. He speaks of twenty-six sermons a month as "moderate labor," and only complains when he had twelve appointments a week, and "no rest week in which to go home and visit his family." He describes his trials in his own characteristic style. "Some days, when riding to my appointments, I was almost all the way in tears; often inquiring of the Lord, in ejaculatory prayers, 'What can I do to save these souls from delusion?' Some threw stones at me, and some set their dogs on me as I rode along. But the Lord defended me. I never had a stone to hit me, nor a dog to bite me. Some threatened to whip me; but I escaped all. I heard of many threats, but none laid hands on me. It was told me, that when I was riding from Springfield to Westfield, a company lay in wait for me in a swamp, through which I had to ride; and they had said they intended to whip me; but as I was passing a house, before I came to the swamp, a woman called to me and informed me that Brother A—— was sick, and had sent to her to desire me to call upon him. I then turned my course, and rode across lots to his house, and, on leaving him, I went another road: so I escaped the mob."

In the town of Chester there was a remarkable reformation, and more than one hundred professed to experience religion; "but," writes Hibbard, "the opposition we met with was very unpleasant, for in many places the minister, in preaching violently against us, induced the most influential men to oppose us, and support themselves. Had it not been that we had the Lord, and the force of truth, on our side, we should not have prevailed and prospered as we did. But, glory be to God! more

than three hundred professed to be converted this year, and I know not of one instance where the revival of religion was through the instrumentality of any but the Methodists. Though many joined the Presbyterians and Baptists, they professed to be awakened and converted by attending the Methodist meetings."

The bishops published several letters from New England preachers, giving brief accounts of the revivals of this year. The difference between the numerical statements of these letters is owing to the difference of their dates. One of them is from Brodhead, Presiding Elder of the New London district, which reached almost to Canada. It is dated Sept. 19th. He says, "At Vershire Quarterly Meeting the Lord was present indeed; at this meeting there were about fifteen hundred people. On the Sabbath we had to preach in the open air: several found Jesus, and others, who had already believed, were overwhelmed with his power. At Wethersfield we had a good time; the work had begun on that circuit; a goodly number have joined. At Chesterfield Quarterly Meeting some appeared to be awakened; I have heard since that seven have been converted in that place. At Pomfret Quarterly Meeting the power of the Lord was felt indeed. New London Quarterly Meeting was still greater; sinners were awfully alarmed. At Tolland Quarterly Meeting it was a great time; the Saturday meeting lasted till three o'clock on Sabbath morning; some professed to experience sanctification, and during the Quarterly Meeting several were awakened; I believe much good was done. The preachers are all in middling health and good spirits, looking with pleasing expectation for greater and more glorious times. On every circuit there is some revival." *

At the end of the year, Brodhead and Bostwick, the latter Presiding Elder in Vermont, wrote a joint letter, dated at Dartmouth College, in which they say, "There is a glorious prospect in both districts of a plentiful harvest. In the Essex circuit, which extends to and includes part of the British dominions,

* Extracts of Letters containing some Account of the Work of God since 1800. *New York*, 1805.

there are more than eighty members added, and but few expelled; the greater part of the new members have professed, and evidence, a change wrought by grace. The Plattsburgh circuit, which lies on the west side of the Lake Champlain, is all on fire: there have been singular displays of God's converting and sanctifying power in this circuit, which is only a two weeks' circle and about sixty members added. The Pittsfield circuit has felt a shock of the Divine power: at our last Quarterly Meeting, some, both of the wicked and the wise, fell to the floor. Some were converted, and six professed sanctification. About seventy-three members were added, including the Whittingham circuit, which is much alive; and the work is enlarging still, and is in a flourishing way. The Granville circuit has been, and still is, favored with a revival in two towns, viz., Westfield and Chester; we believe about eighty members have been added.* We have lost a few members in each circuit, but the precise number we have not been able to ascertain. But, upon the whole, we feel as if Zion was gaining ground, through her Redeemer; and, blessed be the Lord! the preachers seem encouraged to pray, and believe the Lord will give them thousands, as seals to their ministry, this year yet, as he has given them about three hundred and seventy already in this district. We have had a fruitful increase of preachers, on the district, this year, already. There is a good prospect in Landaff circuit: about sixty members have been added there, and the work increases still. Vershire circuit has been blest with an extraordinary work of sanctification; about fifty members added. Wethersfield circuit has been prospered with the addition of about forty members. The work is gradually spreading, and the circuit enlarged from two to four weeks. There has been, and still is, a revival in Chesterfield circuit, particularly in Charlton — about forty members added. There has been a great work in Tolland in the old town; but it afterwards broke out in another part of the town, and about sixty-five members have been added. The New London and Pomfret circuits being united, we give you the account together. The work is promising — about forty members added. We have reason to

*This letter covers not quite one half the time included in our account from Hibbard.

believe the work of the Lord is more prosperous this year, in these circuits, than ever we have known it to be in New England. Our Quarterly Meetings, on both sides of the Connecticut river, have been singularly distinguished by our Lord and Master, and great blessings have followed them. We believe, had we obtained accurate accounts from the preachers, the numbers would have far exceeded what we have mentioned."

Brodhead, whose noble heart flamed with the interest around him, wrote about the middle of the ensuing May (two months before the close of the ecclesiastical year), as follows: "I can inform you that I have been an eye, an ear, and heart-felt witness of the work of God on Landaff, Vershire, and Wethersfield circuits. Near four hundred have joined in society, the year past, on the three circuits; and the work goes on still in a most glorious and remarkable manner. Landaff circuit is all in a flame; upwards of one hundred have been converted to God. Our Quarterly Meetings are generally attended with the power of God, like a mighty rushing wind. On Vershire circuit there is a good work: more than one hundred have joined society, and the power of the Lord is remarkably displayed; many fall down overwhelmed with the power of the Lord, and great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of them. Wethersfield circuit has been gradually gaining ground the whole year, and now, at the close, the times of refreshing are come from the presence of the Lord. I spent a few days on the circuit. We had a number of lively meetings, and some joined society; but nothing remarkable happened till we came to the little town of Athens. Here I preached on Tuesday to a large congregation in the open air; they heard me with great attention. There had been no society formed; it was proposed for me to preach again the next day, read the rules, and form a Class. We had a most melting time; the power of the Lord was present to heal, and eighty-three came forward and joined society. Their eagerness to join alarmed me before they had all joined. I was afraid they had not considered sufficiently what they were doing. I rose up and poured in upon them a very warm exhortation, and told them we wanted none but such as were determined to save their

souls, and would evidence it by walking according to the rules of society. As soon as I ended, they came forward again with streaming eyes, and desired to join, till we made up the number of eighty-three. On Chesterfield circuit near one hundred have joined society, and the prospect is brightening. In Pomfret and New London, nearly one hundred have joined society."

Lee says of the New London district, that "there was a greater work of the Lord in the conversion of souls in that part of New England than had ever been known among the Methodists in those parts of the country." *

The aggregate membership of the Methodist societies in New England, at the close of the ecclesiastical year, was 6976; there had been a gain since the last returns of more than 1100 — nearly one-seventh of the increase of the whole denomination in the United States and Canada. This growth had been chiefly in New Hampshire and Vermont. The former had gained more than 350, and now reported 524 members; Vermont returned 1607, making a gain of 511. At this time, and down to a much later period, not only a large portion, but a large *majority*, of the converts of Methodism in New England, entered other communions; the annual returns form, therefore, no measure of the real usefulness of the denomination. These numerical facts, however, exhibit a rapid success, especially when the recency and inauspicious circumstances of the church are considered. In about twelve years it had gained nearly 7000 members; it had spread its doctrines everywhere through the Eastern States, and had awakened a general spirit of inquiry respecting them; its plans of Itinerant preaching comprehended the latest as well as the oldest settlements, and were beginning to be subdivided, and to admit of more thorough labor; chapels, though yet quite rude ones, were rapidly springing up over the country, and the interior discipline of the denomination was beginning to assume consistency and stability.

* Short History of Methodists. Anno 1800.

CHAPTER IX.

CONFERENCES OF 1801.

Lee. — Asbury. — New York Conference. — Lorenzo Dow. — Candidates. — Success. — New England Conference. — Proceedings. — Finances. — Returns from the Appointments. — New Appointments.

Of the Conferences of 1801, which come within the limits of our narrative, we have scarcely any information. Neither Lee nor Asbury attended them. The former, after his tour of the preceding year through New England, preached in New York city till the beginning of spring, when he passed southward to resume his old posts of labor in the Middle States. He had completed his great mission in the east — a mission great in its results already, and increasingly great, as each succeeding year has continued to unfold its consequences. The bishop, after he last passed from our view on the border of New England, continued his route rapidly from state to state, westward and southward. He commenced his "northern march," as he calls it, from Georgia, in the middle of winter. Whatcoat left him sick in Philadelphia in June, and came northward alone, to attend the New York and New England Conferences.

The New York session began in the city of New York, June 1, 1801. "It was," says a member who was present, "a good Conference; much love and good will were manifest in the preachers. Holiness was still our aim. This doctrine was, in our view, of the highest importance to the Christian world, and the grand mark of our high calling. Perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect love, were all implied in the grand doctrine of holiness; and every one seemed to pant after it, as the hart panteth for the cooling water-brook. To see this among so many preachers, though myself the least, when I went from the Conference I was

refreshed as with new wine; and as a giant I felt strong to run my course, — to renew the war against the devil and sin." *

The venerable Laban Clark was present. He says, "This was the first Annual Conference that I had ever attended. I was not only pleased with their appearance, but with the dignified manner and Christian spirit with which they conducted the business of the session. Seventeen preachers were admitted on trial, seven remained on trial, and four were admitted into full connection. The Conference was composed mostly of young men in the prime of life, and none past the meridian and vigor of manhood. All appeared healthy, and capable of enduring labor; and looking at them, I said to myself, with such men we can take the world." †

There were at least seventeen New England circuits represented in this session, comprising all the societies in Connecticut, western Massachusetts, Vermont, and a portion of New Hampshire. Some of the most noted men of our annals were present, — Merwin, Moriarty, Bostwick, Brodhead, Ryan, Vannest, Clark, Sabin, Mitchell, Ostrander, and others. Nearly forty preachers, about one-half of the Conference, pertained to New England. Among them was one whose unexpected reappearance in their midst created no little surprise, if not perplexity — the eccentric Lorenzo Dow. He was one of those nondescript but earnest men, who, attracted by the energy and enthusiasm of Methodism, joined its early ranks quite numerously. The rigid economy of the denomination generally restrained their eccentricities, but Dow was not so easily controlled.

The ample range of the Itinerancy was not sufficient for his erratic spirit. He had been received, with several years' delay, into the travelling connection; but after laboring about two years, with indefatigable diligence and marvellous success, in various parts of New England, he believed himself called, as we have noticed in our preceding volume, by a preternatural impression, to preach in Ireland. After passing through many adversities in that country, he now suddenly appeared in the midst of his

* Hibbard's Memoirs. † Communication to the author.

old fellow-laborers, many of whom admired his sincere zeal and herculean energy, while they feared his eccentricity. They recognized his relation to the Conference, and appointed him to a circuit — the last one he travelled. Before the next session he departed for the south, and commenced that wandering and tireless career of ministerial labor which has made his name familiar in every corner of the nation. He possessed characteristics not devoid of interest to the student of human nature.

Several young men were received on trial, who have since "made full proof of their ministry." Among them was Elijah Hedding, Phineas Peck, Ebenezer Washburn, Martin Ruter, Laban Clark, Seth Crowell, and Thomas Branch, — now endeared names of either veterans or martyrs in our Itinerancy.

Many of the preachers brought with them cheering intelligence of the prosperity of the past year. It had been a period of religious interest in not only New England, but all parts of the country. Lee says, "I suppose the Methodist connection hardly ever knew such a time of the general revival of religion, through the whole of their circuits, as they had about the latter part of the year 1800." *

The New England Conference commenced its session at Lynn, Mass., July 17th. Whatcoat presided. It was composed of sixteen members, one-half of whom were elders, the other half deacons. † The names of most of the little band are still familiar to the church, for rare services or rare characteristics. Among them are George Pickering, Joshua Taylor, Joshua Wells, Thomas Sargent, Daniel Fiddler, John Finnegan, Epaphras Kibby, Joseph Snelling, Daniel Webb, Asa Heath, Joshua Soule. Another sainted name was added to the list at the present session — that of Oliver Beale, who was received on trial by the recommendation of the Quarterly Conference of Union circuit, Maine.

Solomon Langdon, "being present, passed examination; and being blameless in his life and conversation, as well as useful in the work of the ministry, was continued on trial, he not having

* Short History, Anno 1800.

† Ms. Records. — There were also several Probationers present.

travelled two years." Nathan Emery, Joshua Soule, and John Kinney, a local preacher of Maine, were elected to the office of deacons. Epaphras Kibby, broken in health by his extreme labors and exposures in Maine, was granted a "dispensation" for one year. Joseph Snelling and Aaron Humphreys were the only members elected to Elder's orders. William Beauchamp, Joshua Hall, and Andrew Nichols, were compelled by sickness or domestic necessities to retire into the local ranks.

The records show the jealous caution of the Conference. A local preacher from Maine was refused admission to the travelling connection, "not on account of any immoralities, but on account of a family concern, together with some imprudences." The Conference "supposed that he wanted both gifts and a good report from those who are without." This rejection was unanimous. A candidate who had travelled through the two years of probation underwent not only a severe examination, "in which many things were said for and against him," but also a formal admonition from the bishop. "Levity of conversation, neglect of meeting the Classes, and the want of gifts and grace adequate to the work of the ministry, together with the want of zeal and vigilance, were alleged against him. It was voted that he should be continued on trial, provided the bishop would give him a reprimand, which was given; and, after considering thereupon, he consented to fill an appointment."

The records of the Conference show that the pecuniary privations of the ministry were unabated. Though, as we have heretofore seen, the "allowances" were, besides travelling expenses, but $80 per annum for the preacher, an equal amount for his wife, and but $14 for each child under seven years, and $24 for each between seven and fourteen years, yet was there a deficiency of nearly $700 in the receipts of the twenty-two claimants of the Conference, and *all these claimants except four were single men*,* and therefore entitled to but $80 each. These facts present a very significant illustration of the early trials of our ministry. The aggregate amount allowed

* We ascertain this fact by the amount of allowance against each name in the Conference records.

these twenty-two men and their families, according to the discipline and the Conference records, was but $2206.09; and, on this pittance of about $100 each, the aggregate deficit was $688.94, nearer one-third than one-fourth. The only men who received their full allowance of $80 were Pickering, Sargent, Wells, Beauchamp and Kibby. Some received not half the amount due them. The resources to meet these deficiencies scarcely afforded $170. The dividend from the chartered fund was greater in those days of fewer Conferences than it is at present; it amounted this year to $110. The Baltimore Conference, which had supplied to New England some of its noblest young men, sent, as a "compliment," $25. The preachers made up, by voluntary contributions among themselves, about $27; and two circuits, Warren and Needham, had sent on small sums, amounting to about $8.

The reports of success which the preachers brought from their circuits were not so remarkable as those which had been borne to the New York session, as the localities of the chief religious interest of the year were in Vermont, New Hampshire, western Massachusetts, and Connecticut, and therefore pertained to the jursidiction of the latter Conference. Sargent reported seventy-five members in Boston, only a gain of three during the year. The early progress of Methodism was discouragingly slow in the metropolis; it had gained only an average of two members per annum, during the last five years; but in no place did the denomination show more of its characteristic tenacity and hopefulness; it held on its course unwaveringly, till better auspices appeared. Joshua Wells had a still less encouraging account to give of Lynn; he had applied "the discipline" rigorously, and returned but eighty-nine members — a decrease of five on the returns of the preceding year. Beauchamp had labored successfully at Nantucket. He was the first travelling preacher regularly sent thither.* His returns amounted to eighty, and a large chapel had been erected. No returns were reported from Rhode Island; the statistics of the previous year were

*Joseph Snelling was appointed in 1799, but was sent elsewhere by the Presiding Elder.

therefore inserted in the minutes. From the new Bethel circuit in Maine, fifty-two members were reported. Young Timothy Merritt returned a gain of twenty-five on Bath and Union circuit. Daniel Webb had been prospered on Norridgewock circuit, and Epaphras Kibby reported three hundred and eighty-four members from Readfield circuit, — a gain of seventy-four during the year.

The Conference continued till the 20th of July, when, after singing and prayer, it adjourned to meet at Monmouth, the locality of the first Methodist society in Maine, on the 1st of July, 1802. "On the Sabbath-day," adds the records, "two Deacons and two Elders were ordained; Brother Soule, being absent, missed of his ordination." Such are the scanty intimations which we have been able to gather respecting the Conferences of 1801.

The appointments in the Eastern States, made this year at the New England session, were the following.

Boston District. Joshua Taylor, *Presiding Elder*. *Nantucket*, Joshua Wells; *Provincetown*, Solomon Langdon; *Sandwich*, Joshua Soule; *Warren, Greenwich, and Rhode Island*, John Finnegan and Daniel Fiddler; *Needham*, Joseph Snelling; *Boston, Lynn, and Marblehead*, George Pickering and Thomas Sargent; *Merrimac*, Daniel Webb; *Hawke*, John Merrick.

Province of Maine District. Ralph Williston, *Presiding Elder*. *Portland*, Reuben Hubbard; *Readfield*, Asa Heath and Oliver Beale; *Bath and Union*, Timothy Merritt, Comfort C. Smith; *Penobscot*, Joseph Baker; *Union*, Nathan Emery; *Norridgewock*, Aaron Humphrey; *Bethel*, John Gove.

The New England appointments of the New York Conference, for the present year, were,

New London District. John Brodhead, *Presiding Elder*. *Tolland*, Augustus Jocelyn, Henry Eames; *New London and Pomfret*, Peter Vannest, Phineas Peck, James Annis; *Chesterfield*, Abner Wood and Martin Ruter; *Wethersfield*, John Nichols and Elijah Ward; *Hanover*, Reuben Jones and Joshua Crowell; *Vershire*, Trueman Bishop and Thomas Branch; *Lan-*

daff, Elijah R. Sabin and Matthew Felch; *Barnard*, Joseph Crawford.

Pittsfield District. Shadrach Bostwick, *Presiding Elder*. *Cambridge*, Roger Searle and Ebenezer Stevens; *Vergennes*, Henry Ryan; *Fletcher*, James Coleman and Laban Clark; *Brandon*, Ezekiel Canfield, Ebenezer Washburn; *Pittsfield*, Joseph Mitchell and Oliver Hall; *Whittingham*, Daniel Brumley; *Granville*, Timothy Dewy and Alexander McClure.

Besides these, there were on the New York District, under Freeborn Garrettson as Presiding Elder, *Redding*, Samuel Merwin and Isaac Candee; *Litchfield*, Peter Moriarty and John Sweet; *Middletown*, Elijah Batchelor and Luman Andrus.

The ecclesiastical field in New England comprehended, then, for the year 1801–1802, *four* districts, and part (nearly one half) of another; *thirty-five* circuits and stations,* and *fifty-eight* preachers, comprising the Presiding Elders. We have included in this estimate the Cambridge circuit, which, though named from a New York town, took in some seven or eight towns of Vermont.† There was a gain of apparently two circuits, but really of four; for two which had been distinct the preceding year — Rhode Island and Pomfret — were now merged in adjacent appointments. The new circuits were Barnard, Whittingham (which had been the northern part of Pittsfield circuit), Brandon (the southern section of Vergennes circuit), all in Vermont, and Hanover in New Hampshire. Several of the other circuits had been greatly extended during the past year, but there were not laborers enough to admit of their division. It will be noticed, that though the native New England ministry was multiplying fast, yet the more important posts were still sustained by the strong men who had come from the Middle States. All the Presiding Elders were from among Lee's pioneers.

* Boston, Lynn, and Marblehead, recorded in the Minutes as one, were really separate, but the preachers exchanged every two weeks.

† Bishop Hedding to the author.

CHAPTER X.

NOTICES OF PREACHERS.

Samuel Merwin. — His Appointments. — His Character. — Peter Moriarty. — His early History. — His Appointments. — His Death. — Thomas Branch. — His Appointments. — Departure to the West. — The old Western Conference. — His remarkable Death. — Bishop Hedding at his Grave. — His Character.

In the list of New England appointments this year, are several names which have become memorable to the church. That of Samuel Merwin will not soon be forgotten among the societies of the Atlantic States from Canada to Maryland. Dignified in person, powerful in eloquence, generous in spirit, and mighty in labors, he was one of the "giants of those days." He was dear to New England, not only by his labors, but as one of her own sons, being born in Durham, Conn., Sept. 13, 1777. His early education was strictly religious, and it is said he was from childhood the subject of deep spiritual impressions — an explanation, in part, of the remarkable force of his religious principles and address in subsequent years. While quite young, he was awakened to seek the salvation of his soul, under a funeral discourse; and it is believed that he was converted at this time, but, for lack of suitable guidance, relapsed into a state of carelessness, till the Methodist ministry reached his place of residence, then at New Durham, N. Y., where he was again thoroughly awakened and soundly converted. Glowing with the joy and zeal of a new life, he soon began to exhort on those social religious occasions with which Methodism abounds, and which, have pre-eminently tended to draw forth the talent of its young men, and thereby to recruit its ministry. When not yet twenty years of age, he was despatched, by a Presiding Elder, to labor on a part of the Delaware district, N. Y., and in the year 1800 was received as a probationer at the New York Conference. And

now commenced that career of ministerial labors and successes, extending through about forty years, which has rendered his name familiar through our northern and middle churches. The long catalogue of his appointments is a significant memorial of his services.

He was sent, in 1800, to Long Island circuit; 1801, Redding, Ct.; 1802, Adams, Mass.; 1803, Montreal, Canada; 1804, New York city; 1805, Redding, Conn., with Peter Moriarty; 1806, Boston, Mass., with Peter Jane; 1807 and 1808, Newport, R. I.; 1809, Bristol and Rhode Island; 1810, Albany circuit; 1811, Schenectady; 1812 and 1813, Albany city; 1814, Brooklyn, N. Y.; 1815–18, Presiding Elder of New York district; 1819, New York city; 1820, Albany city; 1821–23, New Haven district; 1824–25, Baltimore; 1826–27, Philadelphia; 1828–29, Troy, N. Y.; 1830–31, New York city; 1832–35, New York district; 1836, New York city; 1837–38, Rhinebeck, N. Y.

We miss his name among the appointments in the Minutes for 1839, but find it first on the list of the dead, with those of Smith Arnold, John Finnegan, and John D. Bangs, all New England Evangelists. He departed to his rest in peace, at Rhinebeck, N. Y., Jan. 13, 1839, after preaching the Gospel about two-score years, with great power and great success.

It will be inferred, from the important posts assigned him, that he was a chief among his brethren. His person was large and commanding, and his voice musical and strong, swaying the largest assemblies. He possessed superior powers of government, and discharged the functions of the Presiding Eldership with special ability. The invaluable talent of reconciling discordant brethren or societies was his in a rare degree, and the kindly, sympathetic spirit which usually accompanies that talent characterized him everywhere, and imparted to his ministrations especially a richly consolatory character. His pulpit appeals were accompanied by a flowing and sweeping eloquence, and the living evidences of his usefulness are yet found throughout the whole extent of his pastoral labors. His brethren of the New York Conference say of him, "Samuel Merwin loved his church, and was most ardently devoted to its interests. Wise in counsel

and skilled in execution, he was always ready to step forward in defence of its rights: he was the friend of all its literary and benevolent institutions; to support them he gave his influence and his money; his voice, too, was often heard, powerfully and successfully pleading their respective claims. But he has gone, and 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.'"

Peter Moriarty, who was appointed this year to Litchfield circuit, also became a veteran in the Itinerancy, and left a fragrant memory in the church. He is another example of that powerful influence which Methodism exerted, in its early days, over the popular mind, subduing the prejudices of education, and smiting, with resistless religious convictions, all classes of men who came within the reach of its ministrations. He left a brief manuscript narrative of his early Christian experience, in which he says, "I was born in Maryland, Baltimore County, April 27, 1758. My parents were Roman Catholics, and my early education was in the Catholic faith. At eleven years of age I was brought to the priest (by my parents) to confess my sins, according to the custom of the Catholics; as also to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which I was taught to believe was the real body and blood of Christ. I went on in this blind way till I was about sixteen years of age, when it pleased God to send the Methodists into the neighborhood where I was born. They soon made a great stir among the people. At length a way providentially opened for me to hear them. They seemed more like angels than men; yet I concluded they could not be right, because they preached that men must know their sins forgiven in this life, in order to be happy hereafter; which I thought to be impossible. I continued to hear them till it pleased the Lord to open my eyes; I then saw that all my confessions to the priest were only delusions of Satan,—I was yet in the road to hell and destruction, with all my sins upon my head: it was then said, by priest and people, 'that the Methodists had made me mad,' and 'that I ought to be restrained from hearing them.' My distress was inconceivably great: I was afraid of God and man; I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep, for some time, I felt

such a pressing load of guilt. My father looked upon me as a graceless child, and said by my weeping and wailing for my sins I was bringing a disgrace on the family; and threatened, if I did not desist, he would turn me away from his house. I applied myself to reading the Scriptures, and sought the Lord according to the light I had, until the Lord looked upon me in my distress, and spoke peace to my troubled soul. I felt I knew that God was reconciled. After this I joined the society, and for several years remained as a private member. When about twenty years of age, I began to feel much impressed to call sinners to repentance. Upon this subject my trials were severe; they so affected me, that, by reasonings, and temptations of Satan, I almost lost my senses. My inability to so great a work was constantly before me. After a long struggle, and a variety of exercises, I gave myself up to the work of the ministry in the year 1781." He appears to have begun to travel in the interim of the Conference, as his name does not appear in the Minutes till 1782, and then he is recorded as remaining on trial.

Down to 1785, his appointments were within the old Virginia Conference. They were as follows: 1782, Brunswick; 1783, Caswell, as colleague of Jesse Lee; 1784, Halifax; 1785, Redstone, with Wilson Lee. The next year, following the example of many of the preachers of the Middle States, he started northward, and was stationed in Philadelphia; in 1787, he advanced still further, and was appointed to Long Island circuit; in 1788–89, to New Rochelle, N. Y., which reached into New England; 1790–91, Dutchess, N. Y., with Menzies Rainor; 1792, Croton, N. Y.; 1793, New Rochelle, N. Y.; 1794, Croton and New Rochelle, N. Y.; 1795–96, Dutchess; 1797, Columbia, N. Y. His name disappears from the appointments in 1799, by a typographical inaccuracy, we suppose, as there is no reason assigned for its omission, and it is retained in the list of Elders. In 1800 he was sent again to Columbia, N. Y. The next year he entered New England, and travelled the Litchfield circuit, Mass. In 1802 he again disappears; in the following year he was appointed to Croton, N. Y.; 1804–5, Redding, Ct., with Samuel Merwin; 1806–7, he was Presiding Elder on

Rhinebeck district, which extended over a portion of New England; 1808, Dutchess; 1809, Ulster; 1810, Chatham; 1811–13, Ashgrove district, which brought him again into New England. In the latter year, while on his way from the Conference to his field of labor, he was attacked by fever, and remained at a friend's on the route, unable to proceed. When he had partially recovered, he resumed his journey; but, on arriving at his home in Hillsdale, May 25th, he was unfit to prosecute his ministerial duties. The "ruling passion" was with him, however, "strong in death;" he had been sounding the alarm through the land, for more than thirty-two years, as an Itinerant Evangelist, and this delay for death seemed too long and too indolent. A scene occurred like that which we have recorded in the sketch of the heroic Pickering. Believing himself better, he retired to bed on the night of the 23d of June, directing his little son to have his horse ready early the next morning, that he might again take the field, and attend a Quarterly Conference, which was to be held that day, at the distance of a few miles. In the morning, when called, he was silent; a higher summons had come to him. A physician who was called pronounced him dead, and to have been so several hours. Thus did this faithful soldier of the cross lay down in his tent at night, to rest from his conflicts, and in the morning was not, for God had taken him. "On the day he was interred, he was to have held a Quarterly Meeting about three miles from his house. But who can tell the consternation of the people, collecting from a large circuit, who on the spot met their Presiding Elder in his coffin! A funeral sermon was delivered to an attentive, weeping congregation, collected from every direction." *

The obituary record of his Conference says, "He was among the oldest of our travelling ministers, and held a rank that entitled him to the confidence and the affections of the connection; and no doubt but his Lord will pronounce him worthy to wear a crown in his kingdom, in which there will be many stars. He labored long, and labored much, to win souls. Although he might not have been classed among the greatest speakers, cer-

* Minutes, 1814.

tainly he was among the most useful; plain in his dress, plain in his manners, and plain and pointed in his preaching, upright in all his deportment; in short, his life was a constant comment upon the Gospel he preached. He delighted in good order and discipline; in the latter he was thought by some to be rather rigorous. He has gone out and in before the flock of God, respected by ministers and people, who seem to express but one sentiment. He was pious as a Christian, useful and beloved as a minister; even the careless and profane who knew him in life are ready to pour upon his tomb the honors his upright life deserved."*

An interesting character, on the Conference roll this year for the first time, was THOMAS BRANCH, one of the saintliest of the holy men who ministered to the church in those days of its first trials. He was a native of Preston, Conn., but the date of his birth has not been ascertained. After travelling a few months, by appointment of the Presiding Elder, he was received on probation at the New York Conference of 1801, — one of a noble band of New England preachers who commenced their Itinerant career about the same time, among whom were Martin Ruter, Laban Clark, Elijah Hedding, Phineas Peck, Ebenezer Washburn, Seth Crowell, and Oliver Beale. His appointment, the present year, was Vershire circuit, Vt., a range of travel about three hundred and fifty miles around, and comprising nearly twenty-five towns. During the next four years he travelled, respectively, Lunenburg (Mass.), Landaff (N. H.), Pomfret (Conn.), and New London (Conn.) circuits. In 1806 he had charge of New London district, and the next four years he presided over the Vermont district. His health failed under the incessant preaching and winter exposures of this large field of labor, which reached into Canada, and required, especially in winter, difficult travelling and much suffering.

In 1811, at the expiration of his term of service on the district, he was placed on the supernumerary list, as a disabled man. The zeal of his spirit could not, however, be checked by the infirmity of the body; he had thoroughly consecrated him-

* Minutes, 1814.

self to his work, and was resolute to die in it. Unable longer to sustain the inclemencies of our climate, he proposed to go to the south-west, and labor, while his dwindling strength should last, in the western Conference — the only Conference then beyond the Alleghanies. It extended from Detroit to Natchez, and was the great frontier battle-field of Methodism, where Cartwright, Finley, Young, Blackman, Winans, Larkin, Quinn, and other giant men, were bearing on the cross in the van of emigration, and travelling vast circuits, over parts of which they had to be protected from the savages by armed escorts. Besides the various choice of climate which this immense field afforded, there was, to the devoted mind of Branch, an heroic if not romantic attraction in its adventurous life, and the triumph with which the Itinerant ministry was spreading the truth in its wildernesses; for though it had been organized only about twenty years, it already ranked as fourth in numerical strength among all the Conferences, and comprised more than twenty-seven thousand members. Its white membership was larger than that of any other Conference.

Branch took leave of his eastern brethren, in much debility, and departed on horseback, with the usual Itinerant accompaniment, the saddle-bags for his few books and rations, to penetrate through the forests to Marietta, on the Ohio. He never arrived, however. On passing from the western wilds of New York, down towards Ohio, along the southern shore of Lake Erie, he disappeared. News came, at last, that he had died somewhere among the log cabins in the then remote wilderness of the north-western angle of Pennsylvania; but even this vague information reached not most of those to whom he was dear in New England till fifteen years later, when one of his old fellow-laborers at the east, who had, meanwhile, been elevated to the Episcopacy, was pursuing his official visitations at the west, and accidentally discovering the place of his decease, sent home for publication in New England information of his fate.* "He

*Bishop Hedding, to whom we are indebted for these facts, and who published them in the Zion's Herald of 1826.

fell," wrote his friend, "in the wilderness, on his way to this country, in the month of June, 1812. His sepulchre is in the woods, in the State of Pennsylvania, near the shore of Lake Erie, between the States of New York and Ohio. As I came through that part of the country, I made inquiry respecting the sickness, death, and burial, of our once beloved fellow-laborer in the cause of Christ. An intelligent friend, who said he had frequently visited and watched with him in his last sickness, and attended his funeral, gave me, in substance, the following circumstances. When Brother Branch came into the neighborhood where he died, it was a new settlement, where there was no Methodist society, and but few professors of religion of any name. He preached on a Sabbath, and at the close of the service stated to the strangers that he was on a journey, — that he was ill and unable to proceed, — and desired that some one would entertain him till he should recover his strength sufficiently to pursue his journey. There was a long time of silence in the congregation; at last, one came forward and invited him home. At that house he lingered many weeks, and finally expired. The accommodations were poor for a sick man; — a small log house, containing a large family, consisting in part of small children; but doubtless it was the best the place could afford. In his sickness (which was a pulmonary consumption), his sufferings were severe; but his patience and his religious consolations were great also. He frequently preached, prayed, and exhorted, sitting on his bed, when he was unable to go out, or even to stand. And so he continued laboring for the salvation of men while his strength would permit, and rejoicing in the Lord to the hour of his death. The above-named eye and ear witness informed me that Brother Branch frequently said to him 'It is an inscrutable Providence that brought me here to die in this wilderness.' — 'But,' said the witness, 'that Providence was explained after his death. For, through the instrumentality of his labors, his patience, fortitude, and religious joys, in his sickness, a glorious revival of religion shortly after took place, a goodly number of souls were converted to God, — other preachers were invited to the place, and a large Methodist society

was organized after his death.' That society continues to prosper, and they have now a decent house for worship. After the soul of our brother had rested in heaven, his body was conveyed to the grave on a sled, drawn by oxen. The corpse was carried to a log building in the woods, called a meeting-house; but the proprietors denied admittance, and the funeral solemnities were performed without. As I came through the woodland in company with a preacher, having been informed where the place of our friend's interment was, leaving our horse and carriage by the road, we walked some rods into the forest, and found the old log meeting-house, which had refused the stranger the rites of a funeral; but it was partly fallen, and forsaken. Then following a narrow path some distance further through the woods, we came to a small opening, which appeared to have been cleared of the wood for a habitation for the dead. After walking and looking some time, a decent stone, near one corner of the yard, under the shade of the thick-set, tall forest, informed us where the body of our dear departed friend had been laid. A large oak-tree had fallen, and lay across two of the adjoining tenants of that lonely place. We kneeled, prayed, and left the lonely spot, in joyful hopes of meeting our brother again at the resurrection of the just. The associations of the place carried my thoughts back to the northern parts of New Hampshire and Vermont, where, many years since, I had rode, walked, talked, and prayed, in company with Thomas Branch. Two important reflections have since often impressed my mind. One is, in how many circumstances a faithful minister of Christ may be useful — even in his most severe sufferings, and under the darkest dispensations of Providence which he may be called to endure. Little did Thomas Branch think that the fruits of his last labors and sufferings would be so abundant after his death. The other is, how much good may be done by the remembrance of the virtues of a faithful Christian, long after he is dead. The memory of the example of Thomas Branch, revived in my mind by visiting his grave, has been a means of quickening my desires to live as he lived, and of strengthening my hopes of finally reaching that heaven to which, I trust, he has gone."

Thomas Branch was an able, powerful preacher; his memory is still inexpressibly precious among the elder Methodists of New England, many of whom were led by him to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." He "walked with God," and the unction of Divine grace seemed ever to abide upon his soul. "His conversation was in heaven," and in the social circle, as well as in the pulpit, he continually preached Christ. His old fellow-laborers spoke of him, in their Conference obituary, with unwonted emphasis: — "An Israelite indeed, in life and in death. Who ever saw him out of the gravity and sincerity of a Christian minister? always apparently collected and recollected — a child of affliction and a son of resignation: how loved and honored of God and men! For several years a member of our connection, and secretary for the New England Conference. Rest, rest, weary dust! Rest, weary spirit, with the Father of spirits, and live forever!"

The heart of many an old Methodist will throb, and his eyes water, at the sanctified recollections of this sainted man which our brief narrative will recall; and as we pen these closing lines with a painful sense of their unavoidable inadequacy for a character so interesting, we feel nevertheless thankful that we are permitted to rescue, from the oblivion which was fast obscuring it, a name that deserves to rank with those of saints and martyrs, and of which we take leave with no ordinary sentiments of Christian love and veneration.

CHAPTER XI.

NOTICES OF PREACHERS, CONTINUED.

Ebenezer Washburn. — Calvinism. — Christian Experience. — Joseph Sawyer. — Lorenzo Dow. — Appointments. — Sanctification. — Grave of Martin Ruter. — His early Life. — Margaret Peckett. — John Brodhead. — Ruter enters the Ministry — Appointments. — Dies in Texas. — His Character.

Among the few veterans of our Itinerancy who still survive from the early period we are now contemplating, is Ebenezer Washburn, who, after about a half-century spent in the ministry, is awaiting, in a venerable and devout old age, the summons which shall reünite him with his old fellow-laborers, in their eternal rest. He was born in Hardwich, Worcester County, Mass., Oct. 25th, 1772, and trained in the strictest religious education of the times. "The ever-faithful Spirit," he says,* "the Divine Comforter, often accompanied the instructions and admonitions of my pious mother, and reproved me of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come. Often I was brought to see myself to be a sinner against God, and to be convinced of the necessity of a change of heart, in order to be happy here or hereafter; and often was my conviction so great as to drive me to secret prayer. But, alas! I had no one to direct me to come to Christ in the means of grace; the doctrine was, that the sinner could neither repent nor believe till he was converted by the sovereign power of God. All the preaching I heard was in strict conformity with the Saybrook Platform and the Westminster Confession of Faith. And when I went to my pious mother for an explication of these, she would tell me that they were mysteries, dark and incomprehensible, — that I ought not to try to search into them. My conclusion was, that it was useless

* Letters in the Christian Adv. and Jour., 1842.

for me to make myself unhappy by reflecting on the subject. If I was one of the elect, God would bring me in when it should meet the counsel of his own will, and best subserve his own glory; and if I was a reprobate, and must inevitably go to hell, since neither prayers, nor tears, nor anything else, could alter my case, it would not be wise in me to be the instrument of tormenting myself before the time, but to leave that matter wholly with God: eat, drink and be merry, and take all the comfort I could in the present life. Thus I went on, being often awakened, and as often repelling conviction by language drawn from the common creed of New England. What a wonder of mercy that I was not driven into a state of total despair!" He removed, in 1796, to Petersburg, N. Y. Here he heard, in 1798, for the first time, a Methodist preacher — Joseph Sawyer. The sermon seemed designed as a picture of his own character. It portrayed him with minute accuracy, and produced an irresistible effect on his conscience. His account of the subsequent exercises of his mind presents some very interesting illustrations of Christian experience, as well as of the desperate conflict which truth has often to wage in the human mind with the errors of a wrong education. "I strove at first to conceal my feelings, but it was in vain; for ere I was aware my eyes overflowed with tears, I sighed with anguish, and I wept in the bitterness of my soul. When the preacher had closed his exercise, he came and sat down by me, and asked me if I had ever experienced religion? I said 'No.' He then asked me if I believed in the reality of religion. I answered 'Yes.'—'Well,' said he, 'if I will give you a few words of good advice, will you follow them?'—I said, 'I will, as far as I am able.'—'Then,' said he, 'I advise you to search the Scriptures every day; to pray in secret at least twice a day; to avoid that which you know to be wrong; and to walk according to the best light you can obtain. Is this good advice?' I answered in the affirmative. 'Then,' said he, 'God is witness between you and me. You have promised that if I would give you good advice, you would follow it.' And he rose and left me. I thought I would have given almost anything in my power to give, if he would have stayed and have given me an

opportunity to tell him the feelings of my heart, and have given me some further religious instruction; but he was immediately on his horse, and gone. I returned home with a heavy heart. When I retired to my bed-room, my promise came to my mind. But how could such a sinner pray? It appeared to me, that if I attempted it, a just and holy God would spurn me from his presence. But God was witness between me and the preacher, and I dare not forfeit my promise. With a trembling heart, I fell on my knees by the bedside; and, after remaining some time in profound and fearful silence, I began to repeat the Lord's Prayer; when it appeared as though a voice whispered in my ear, 'There, you miserable reprobate! you have called God your Father! And do you believe he will acknowledge that relation to such an abominable child of the devil as you?' I rose from my knees much affrighted, and almost involuntarily cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' I got into bed; but there was neither rest nor sleep for me that night. I was a sinner against God; and the axe was already raised in the hand of Justice, to cut me down as a cumberer of the ground.

"The next morning, urged on by my promise, I knelt down and tried to pray; but I had said but a few words before the subtle enemy presented to my mind the whole system of Hopkinsianism, and suggested that the prayers of the wicked are abomination to the Lord; hence every petition I attempted to make to the Lord would render me still more abominable in his sight, and would have a tendency to increase and enhance my destruction.

"When I read the Scriptures, I found no comfort. All the threatenings were directed against me, while all the promises belonged to the elect. Thus I went on for several days. If I closed my eyes in sleep, I was terrified with dreams; and when awake, I was so harassed with temptations as to disqualify me for any regular train of reflection.

"The next Sabbath, I went to hear Lorenzo Dow. The whole drift of his discourse went to show the justice of the claims of the Divine law upon man, and to thunder its curses upon transgressors. Here I was cut off from every ground of hope, and

driven into deeper despondency. At the close of his sermon, he requested all who wished to seek the salvation of their souls to kneel down with him, and he would pray for them.

"I felt, that if there was salvation for so vile a wretch as I, I was willing to seek it at the expense of any sacrifice within my power to make, and immediately fell on my knees, as did several others. Here the enemy, taking advantage of my Calvinian education, sorely tempted me, telling me that I was a reprobate, and that I was deceiving that good man, and causing him to mock God, by praying to him to save one whom he had reprobated by an unalterable decree. When the congregation was dismissed, the preacher came to me, and asked me if I wished to seek the salvation of my soul. I told him I feared that I was a reprobate, and that there was no salvation for me. He said, 'Are you not a sinner?' — I answered 'Yes, one of the greatest of sinners.' — 'Did not Christ die for sinners?' said he. 'No,' said I, 'not for reprobate sinners.' — 'That is a mistake,' said he; 'Christ died for none but reprobates. He came to save that which was lost; and if you are lost, he came to save you. And the Bible tells you, that "he tasted death for every man." If you are a man, he tasted death for you.' He then quoted a number of scriptures to prove the universality of the atonement, and to show that every one might be saved who would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He then persuaded me and several others to enter into covenant to meet Him at the throne of grace three times a day, till he came round again, in four weeks.

"I was not troubled so much, after this. But when I attempted to pray, the enemy would suggest to my mind that it was too late. Time was when I might have obtained salvation; but I had resisted conviction, refused the offers of mercy, and chosen the way to death, till that time was passed by; and I had sealed my own damnation by my own folly. Thus I went on for a little more than three weeks, sometimes faintly hoping that there was mercy in store for me, and sometimes almost in total despair. I never violated my covenant with the preachers, but maintained a fixed determination, that, if I perished, I would perish at the foot of the cross, crying out for mercy.

"On Sabbath morning, after an almost sleepless night, I arose from my bed a little before the rising of the sun, and after partly dressing myself, I took up the Bible and opened it, with a strong cry, both in my heart and on my tongue, of 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' The first words I cast my eye upon were the words of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah, 'In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.' Isa. 54: 4. That moment the cloud broke, and the Spirit sealed the promise to my heart. My mournful state was changed; my burden of guilt was removed, and a calm and heavenly peace sprang up within my breast. The change was truly glorious. I had such a view of the Saviour crucified for me, and of my acceptance with God through the merit of his blood, as I could never find language to express. My heart was filled with love, and my tongue was tuned to songs of praise."

In those days, to become a Methodist was to become an active laborer in the church. Mr. Washburn soon began to exert himself for the salvation of his neighbors; and in three years, he joined the New York Conference. He took his first appointment the present year, on Brandon circuit, Vt. It was a rough introduction to the trials of Itinerancy. "I went on," he says, "and found a large circuit, the country new, the roads bad, and the mud very deep. My first business was to alter my plan, so as to go around the circuit in three weeks. This reduced me to the necessity of preaching three times on the Sabbath, and twice almost every day in the week. I travelled my three weeks' circuit three months, and then the Lord and the Presiding Elder sent Brother Samuel Draper to my help. We labored together in much love and harmony one quarter, and then I was moved to Vergennes circuit, to labor the rest of the year alone."

In 1802 and 1803, he was sent to Granville circuit, Mass., with Henry Eames; and his subsequent appointments were, 1804 and 1805, Middletown, Conn., with Nathan Emery; 1806, New London, Conn.; 1807, Pomfret, Conn.; 1808, Ashburnham, Mass.; 1809, Conference missionary. In 1810 he located,

but in 1813 resumed his travels, and was appointed to Stratford, Conn., with James Coleman; in 1814, he travelled Redding circuit, Conn. In 1815, he was stationed in New York city, where he continued two years, with Thatcher, Scholefield, Ostrander, and other New England preachers. In 1817, he took charge of Rhinebeck district, which he travelled till 1821, when he was appointed to Goshen, Conn. In 1822, he was returned to New York city, and continued there two years. In 1824, he was sent to New Haven, Conn.; 1825 and 1826, Middletown, Conn.; 1827 and 1828, Goshen, Conn.; 1829 and 1830, Redding, Conn.; 1831 and 1832, New Rochelle, N. Y.; 1833 and 1834, New Galtz, N. Y.; 1835, Amenia, N. Y.; 1836 and 1837, Cornwall, Conn.; 1841 and 1842, Winstead, Conn. In 1842, he retired into the superannuated ranks, with Hibbard, Woolsey, Crawford, Hunt, Ostrander, and other veterans of the New England field. He had travelled about two score years, with much success, and many incidents of adventure and suffering, which would add greatly to the interest of this brief sketch; but, as he will reäppear often in the course of our narrative, we reserve them for future pages.

Ebenezer Washburn is now bending under the weight of more than three score and ten years; his brow is not only venerable with age, but with the development of strong faculties, and the indented lines of thought. The characteristic expression of his face is one of blended intellectual repose and energy. He has been distinguished by great purity and steadfastness of character, and a theological acumen that served him admirably in the polemical collisions which were inevitable in his early New England travels. He has been esteemed, throughout his long ministry, for sound judgment, equanimity and blandness of manners, good pulpit talents, and integrity as a Disciplinarian. As he still lives, it is not yet time to speak more fully of his excellences; it may be remarked, however, that he has stood before the church a worthy example of that noble Itinerant brotherhood which composed our Conferences a half-century ago, and which included so many sainted men. Like most of them, he preached and early sought the grace of entire sanctification.

His testimony on the subject is too interesting to be omitted. "When I commenced the work of the ministry, I fully believed in every point of Methodist doctrine contained in the articles of our church. I endeavored to preach every part of Methodism, and designed to conform my life to the doctrine I preached. As respects the great doctrine of Christian perfection, I preached it by stating the doctrine, proving it by the Scriptures, and obviating the objections brought against it by other denominations. This I did theoretically, without the experience of the work of sanctification in my own breast, and without the enjoyment of the inestimable benefits flowing from such an experience. I often desired it, and ardently prayed for it. I frequently felt my own soul to be stirred up and quickened while preaching it, and had various evidences that God rendered it a blessing to others. When going to the Lynn Conference, in 1805, I attended a Quarterly Meeting in Tolland, and preached on the subject of holiness, and there was the shout of a king in the camp of Israel; and the next year I went to a camp-meeting at Square Pond, and as I entered the grove an aged man met me and accosted me very familiarly. I looked at him, but could not recognize him. He said, 'You do not know me; but I know you, and I know that you preached the word of God into my soul last June, in Hervey Howard's orchard, and it remains there yet.' I recollect, when on Granville circuit, there was a place where we had preached several months without any visible effect; I preached a sermon on sanctification, and a number of souls were awakened. But when I came to New London circuit, I felt the importance of being more fully devoted to God, and earnestly prayed to him for a clean heart. The second time that I preached in New London, I spoke in the morning on 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.' During the intermission, as I was walking the floor, in a room by myself, I was contemplating on this wise: I verily believe the doctrine I have preached this morning. I have no doubt but it is the Christian's privilege to experience and enjoy all the holiness for which I have contended; and why am I living so far beneath my privilege? There were a number

of books lying on a table, and, as I passed by them, I rather inadvertently took up one and opened it, and the first words that caught my eye were in substance as follows: 'Thus it plainly appears that the great reason why we are not more holy is because we have never, in heart, intended it.'— (Law's Serious Call to a Holy Life.) I paused, and then inquired, Is it so? In all my desires for it, and my prayers and tears that I might experience it, have I been hypocritical, and never yet intended to be holy in heart and in life? I continued to read, and soon became convinced that, with all my desires for the blessing, I had never intended to have it at the expense of all things. I clearly saw, that if I would have that pearl, I must sell all that I had in order to purchase it. I fell on my knees before the Lord, and asked for light to direct my course, and the Spirit to help my infirmities; and there covenanted with God, that, by his grace assisting me, I would never give up the strife till I as fully knew Christ to be my sanctification as I ever knew him to be my justification. From that time I felt as deep conviction of the necessity of perfect love, as I ever did of the necessity of the pardon of my sins. On the evening of the third day, while wrestling with God in secret, I thought there was nothing of an earthly nature which I could not freely sacrifice for Christ; and I was enabled to say, by faith, Here, Lord, I give myself away, soul, body, and spirit, with all my powers and passions, and all I have, to be at thy disposal; henceforth, I repose my trust in thee for wisdom and righteousness, for joy and peace, for life and death. That moment Christ revealed himself to me the second time unto full salvation. The change I then experienced was as great as that of my first conversion, and far more glorious; I felt that I not only loved God more than anything else, but more than all things else combined. Though this was thirty-six years ago, I have never wholly lost the witness I then received. My enjoyments have not been always alike, but there has not been a day in which I have not felt the inward witness of perfect love. I have tried and proved the excellence of religion about forty-four years. I have found it good under all the circumstances and conditions through which I have been called to pass. In sickness, it has

been my support; in affliction, my comfort and consolation; in seasons of persecution and temptation, my hiding-place and never-failing defence; in scenes of poverty, a rich treasure, far more precious than that of gold or silver. I am now turned of seventy years of age, and I never felt more in love with, or more closely united to, the church, to whom, under God, I owe all I am and all I hope to be, than at the present time. Neither did I ever feel more willing to labor, suffer, and sacrifice, to promote its interests."

As the author of these pages wandered in Texas for health during a winter, some years ago, he was led by a Christian brother out upon a bluff, which overlooked the noble Brazos, far up in the interior of the country, and, at that time, almost within reach of the incursions of the savages. A grave was pointed out to him upon its summit; it was unhonored by any monument, but it contained all that was mortal of MARTIN RUTER, — a name which appears this year for the first time in our ministerial records. After laboring with distinguished success through New England and other parts of the Union, he had resigned the presidency of a college, that he might devote himself as a missionary to the new field of moral labor which the young republic of Texas had opened; and he had fallen with the honors of a martyr to his devotion.

Martin Ruter was born in Sutton, Mass., in April, 1785; in 1793, his father, Job Ruter, moved to Bradford, Vt. "In 1797," writes one of his early associates, "the Itinerant Methodist ministers were introduced into this section of our country, by the solicitations and persevering efforts of the late Rev. John Langdon, who died a few years since, near Cincinnati, Ohio; and, in 1798, Brother Job Ruter, having moved into Corinth, opened his house for preaching, and received Methodist preachers to his humble but hospitable home. Although he and his wife had been members of the Baptist church several years, they united with the first Methodist Class formed in their neighborhood, and remained members of the Methodist Episcopal church until called to their eternal reward. Being myself among the first fruits of Methodism in these parts, I often attended meeting at

their house, a distance of seven miles, and took much satisfaction in their society, and profited by their Christian conversation and deep experience in the things of God. The recollections of those seasons of Christian simplicity, humble piety, fervent charity, and undissembled friendship, will remain with me while memory lasts. Some time in the summer of 1799, Martin became a subject of the justifying grace of God, through faith in Christ, and joined the Class that met in his father's house. There was nothing remarkable in his first experience; he was diffident and retiring, but with his accustomed modesty there was a stability and gravity which was uncommon for his age, as he was only in his fifteenth year. The winter following, he returned to Bradford to attend school, in the immediate neighborhood of my father's residence, and took board with Mrs. Peckett, an English lady, whose maiden name was Margaret Appleton, and who was housekeeper for Rev. John Wesley. I mention this circumstance, because it afforded me an opportunity of becoming more intimately acquainted with his Christian experience and studious habit; and I also consider it of singular use to him, as it had been to me, to be favored with the counsel and instruction of this excellent woman and mother in Israel. We were not only advised and encouraged in our religious experience and duty, but we learned from her the peculiar forms and usages, not only of early Methodism, but of the founder of Methodism. In the spring and summer of 1800, I commenced holding public meetings for exhortation and prayer; and as they had no Sabbath preaching in Bro. Ruter's neighborhood, I often met with them, to assist in the public exercises, such as they were. I found Martin laboring under the same conviction of duty to devote himself to God, and the ministry of his Word, that I had myself felt for many months, and we opened our minds freely to each other; but the greatness of the work, the fearfulness of the responsibility, and our insufficiency for the undertaking, would so overwhelm our feelings, that we could only view the subject in the perspective, as an object at a great distance, which we looked at with mingled emotions of desire and hope, accompanied with fear and trembling. About the first

of September, the Quarterly Meeting for our circuit was held in Vershire. Rev. John Brodhead was the Presiding Elder. It was a time of considerable religious excitement, and the people came together from a great distance. The assembly was large, and we had no house that could contain the multitude. It was, therefore, determined to have preaching in a grove of lofty maples, that was near at hand. During the Love Feast and Sacrament, which were held in a private dwelling, the people thronged about the house by hundreds. When these services were about to conclude, Martin stood at a window, and addressed an exhortation to those without. His soul seemed fired with an affectionate and holy zeal for the conversion of the people; his language flowed with a manly eloquence. The multitude without wept, and there was a great shout within, while all marvelled to hear such words from a youth of fifteen years. The public meeting commenced in the grove, between ten and eleven o'clock. Two sermons were preached, with very little intermission, except the time that was occupied by singing and prayer. The second sermon was from these words, 'Lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping: and what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch.' The Elder showed the insensibility, thoughtless security and supineness, of unregenerate men, and exhorted them to wake up to their eternal interests. He then presented to their view the danger and wretchedness of being found sleeping, in that awful hour, when summoned to the bar of God; here he dwelt on the terrific scenes of Christ's second advent and the final judgment, until imagination could almost hear the thunders of the last trumpet, and see the vault of heaven rolled up and passing away. There was an awful solemnity on the entire congregation, and the stillness of midnight prevailed, with no other interruption than the preacher's voice, and occasionally the half-stifled sighs of heart-stricken sinners, as they sank down upon the ground, or clung to some tree to keep them from falling. Before he concluded, there were some thirty or fifty persons lying on the ground, like men slain in battle. Saint and sinner were constrained to acknowledge the presence of God, and the power of his Gospel. Many were awakened, some converted, and believers were filled with

joy and wonder, at the gracious displays of the Divine Spirit that accompanied that Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. At the conclusion of the meeting, while the people were retiring, Mr. Brodhead came to Martin, and threw his arms around him and said, 'Martin, I want you to go with me;' to which he replied, with childlike simplicity, 'If my father will let me, I will go.' On going into the house, the Elder went to Mr. Ruter, saying, 'You must let Martin go with me;' to which he objected, on account of his being too young. 'But,' said the Elder, 'he has got the broad-axe, and he must go and hew down the forest.' The father made many other objections, which the Elder obviated, until the old gentleman consented, and agreed to fit him out for the journey in two weeks. Mr. B. returned to Martin, and informed him that his father had given his consent, and he must be ready in two weeks to go with him around the district. The young man was taken with surprise, and the thought rushed into his mind, He will set me to preaching, and I am not sure that God has called me to the work; and it will be a terrible thing for me to run before I am sent. He was greatly affected, and so distressed that he retired into secret, and, with his Bible in his hand, he fell upon his knees and struggled in prayer for direction; then opened his Bible, and the first sentence that struck his eye was this, '*The Master is come and calleth for thee.*' These words were accompanied with such an evidence of his call to the work of the ministry, that, with a flood of tears, he answered, 'I will go.' When his mother learned the arrangement, she seemed irreconcilable, and went to the Presiding Elder, and asked, with much earnestness, 'What are you doing? How can you think of setting that child to preaching? It cannot, it must not be: he is but a child, and it will be his ruin.' Bro. Brodhead heard her, and, with his accustomed good-humor, said, 'Sister, hold your peace; the Lord hath need of him, and he must go.' Seeing she could gain nothing by her remonstrance, she left him and betook herself to her closet. With agonized feelings, she opened the Bible, and the words she first read were, '*Loose him and let him go.*' Her spirit suddenly became tranquil, and she was enabled to say, 'Lord, he is thine;

and I give him to thee, and the work to which thou hast called him.'"*

Thus began the long and successful Itinerant ministry of Martin Ruter. He travelled a short time with Brodhead on the district, exciting everywhere unwonted interest, by his rare talents, as well as by his youth. He was subsequently sent to Wethersfield circuit, Vt., until the ensuing Conference. This circuit was a new one, formed in the east part of the state; it extended from the west bank of the Connecticut to the foot of the Green Mountains, and was at this time enlarged, from a two to a four weeks' tour, so that it afforded him a thorough introduction to the fatigues and privations of the Itinerancy.

He was received on trial at the New York Conference of 1801, being then only about sixteen years of age — the youngest man ever admitted to an American Conference, except the Rev. George Gary, who was received into the New England Conference when a few months younger, and, like Ruter, vindicated, by a devoted and useful life, the prudence of the step under the peculiar circumstances of the times. His appointments for the ensuing three years were, respectively, Chesterfield (N. H.), with Abner Wood; Landaff (N. H.), with Phineas Peck, and Adams (Mass.). In 1804 he volunteered as a missionary to Canada, was appointed to Montreal, and labored with much acceptance and usefulness. The next year he returned to the States, and was sent to Bridgewater, N. H. He was subsequently appointed to Northfield, N. H.; Boston, with Daniel Webb; New Hampshire district for two years; Portland, Me.; in 1812, he located, but in 1814 reäppears again in the Minutes, as sent to North Yarmouth, Me., where he had resided during his location; the next two years he labored at Salisbury, Mass., and Philadelphia, Penn. After spending two years in Philadelphia with much popularity and usefulness, he was recalled to New England, to take charge of the Methodist Academy at New Market, N. H. The next year he was appointed to Portsmouth, N. H., but, by an arrangement with his Presiding Elder, remained in charge of the seminary. The General Conference of 1820 founded the Western Book Con-

* Rev. Laban Clark to the author.

cern, and designated him to the charge of it; he was reäppointed to the same responsible position in 1824; and at the expiration of his remaining term of service, having been in the office eight years, he accepted the presidency of Augusta College, Ky. He held this post four years, and was then transferred to Pittsburg Conference, and stationed in Pittsburg, Pa., during two years. In 1835 he accepted the presidency of Alleghany College, Penn., which he had been chiefly instrumental in founding.

The evangelic zeal which had thus far glowed like a flame in his heart kindled still more intensely at the prospects of missionary enterprise and success which were now opened in Texas. Though in a position of great usefulness and dignity, he resigned his presidency, after successfully filling it for about three years, and started, in 1837, with two or three young companions, for the distant prairies of the new republic. His labors there were gigantic. He traversed the country, forming societies, projecting circuits, and preaching continually. He also founded a literary institution at Rutersville, a town that now commemorates his name and worth.

His indefatigable exertions, and frequent exposures in an untried climate, brought upon him severe sickness, under which his robust health gave way, and he expired at Washington, Texas, May 16th, 1838, in great peace, and "unshaken confidence in God."* His death produced a sensation of deep sorrow throughout the church, to all portions of which his long and devoted labors and eminent qualities had endeared him. The New England Conference, within whose bounds his name was as ointment poured forth, was in session at Boston when the sad intelligence arrived. It was announced first from the pulpits on Sunday morning, and was noticed by Drs. Fisk and Bascom in their discourses during the day, amidst the profound emotions of the people, many of whom had sat under his ministry.

Dr. Ruter was self-educated, but acquired a good acquaintance with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, the Mathematics, History, and other branches of knowledge. He was honored spontaneously with the titles of A. M. and D. D. He was an assiduous student while pursuing the fatiguing routes of his

* Minutes, 1838.

Itinerant ministry, and is, like Adam Clark, an example of the success with which even elaborate studies may be sustained under the inconveniencies of such a life. In person he was substantially formed, and dignified in his manners. He had the affability of the Christian gentleman; his voice was unusually melodious, and his love of music strong. In the pulpit he was grave, pathetic, and often commandingly eloquent. He lived in habitual communion with God; and his piety, ever reverential, and yet cheerful, gave the charm of a pure Christian cordiality to his whole character. One of his early companions, who knew him well,* says, — "He was not spoiled by universal applause. He had attended a common school at Corinth, Vermont, such as they then were, only kept a few months in the year; but his soul thirsted for knowledge, and he improved every moment in getting or doing good. He appeared to consecrate all his time, talents, knowledge, and influence, to the glory of God, and the benefit of the world. Who can tell how much his godly mother helped him by her prayers! Truly a mother in Israel! and this but coldly speaks her praise. She lived within speaking distance of Paradise, and kept up a constant communication. Her lessons of instruction to me, more than forty-five years ago, have been doing me good ever since. Her faith was mighty, when she had fast hold of a promise, and often was their consecrated dwelling filled with the Divine glory. Who that knew her son, of many prayers, from the time he began to preach, or during his ministry, until May 16th, 1838, when he was taken triumphantly from Texas to heaven, but would say, by the grace of God he was an extraordinary man?"

Devotedly useful as his life had been, his death — a noble self-sacrifice in the interior of a wilderness country, far from his family, and accompanied by severe but patient suffering — was hardly less so. It made a general and an affecting appeal to the heart of the church, in behalf of the missionary cause; and many a youth, with like literary aspirations and hopes, has felt that in this instance of the martyr-like devotion of an intellectual and distinguished man to missionary labor was presented an example for himself full of heroic nobleness.

*Rev. Asa Kent.

CHAPTER XII.

FURTHER BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

Laban Clark. — Introduction of Methodism into Vermont. — John Langdon. — Calvinism. — Christian Experience. — Evangelical Excursions. — Anecdotes. — Landaff Circuit. — Brodhead. — Prosperity in Vermont. — The New York Conference at the Beginning of the Century. — Fletcher Circuit. — Privations. — Appointments. — Characteristics. — Oliver Beale. — His Appointments. — Character.

Laban Clark, who joined the Itinerant ranks the present year, still survives, and sustains an effective relation to the ministry. He was born in Haverhill, N. H., July 19, 1778; but in his infancy his family removed to Bradford, Vt., and here Mr. Clark's childhood was spent under the hardy training of a new country, and the strict religious discipline of New England. He early manifested unusual mental and moral susceptibilities, and was particularly interested in the conversation of Mrs. Peckett, the English Wesleyan lady already referred to — a lady whose influence was of no little importance in the introduction of Methodism into Vermont. With Mr. Clark's early life were associated the first historical events of our cause in that state, and we are indebted to him for the following information respecting some of them.*

In 1796, Mr. Nicholas Sneathen was appointed to Vershire, in Vermont, as we have seen in our preceding volume. He was the first Methodist preacher who visited that part of New England. This appointment was made at the earnest request of Mr. John Langdon, a native of South Wilbraham, Mass., who settled in Vershire when the country was new. Being of a thoughtful turn of mind, and fond of reading, he became dissatisfied with the doctrines which had been taught him from his youth. The tenet of fore-ordination was to him a stumbling-block, and totally at variance with the New Testament. After many fruit-

* Communication to the author.

less efforts to find a people with whom he could agree in opinion and unite in fellowship, he gave up the search in despair.

As he entered his house one day, his wife informed him that she had received a letter from her father (Dea. Ashley, of Springfield), and that he had sent them a book. John answered, "I am glad to have a letter from him; but I don't want his book, for I suppose it contains his Calvinism." — "No, I think not," she replied; "he writes something I do not understand," and handed him the letter. John read the letter, and then took up the book and read till interrupted by tears of joy. He said, "This man writes just as I have believed." He then turned again to the letter, which stated that a new sect of preachers had visited them, called Methodists; that they went out two and two like the apostles, travelled circuits, and preached free salvation to all men. Taking up the book, he read again; and after reading a while, he sprang upon his feet and exclaimed, "If there is such a people under heaven, I will find them!"

Shortly after, he received information that there was to be a great meeting of the Methodists in Tolland, Connecticut, called a Quarterly Meeting. Although he had but four days' notice, and the distance was nearly two hundred miles, he set off, and arrived on Saturday, just after the meeting had closed for the afternoon; but learning that there was to be preaching in the evening, he put up for the night. At the time appointed, he repaired to the meeting, which was in a private house, and took his seat in the congregation. After waiting a little while, a plain man stepped in, with his hymn-book in his hand. A short pause ensued, when the preacher gave out the hymn,

> "O, that I could repent!
> O, that I could believe!
> Thou with thy voice the marble rent, —
> The rocks in sunder cleave."

This was the very language of his own heart, and he thought he never heard such a hymn before. After singing, the preacher kneeled down and prayed. The prayer was as extraordinary as the hymn; and John, having understood that the Methodists had

bishops, concluded this must certainly be the bishop, for no common man could make such a prayer. He was, however, a young man, who had just been licensed to preach. The sermon was equally satisfactory to him; and when the meeting was ended, he stepped forward and introduced himself to the preachers, informing them how far he had come, and for what purpose. He wished to learn their doctrine and form of discipline. The preachers received him kindly, and were ready to answer all his inquiries, and invited him to attend their Love Feast the next morning. That Sabbath was to him as the beginning of days; he had found a people with whom he could unite in doctrine, and who he believed to be the people of God. Before he left, he obtained a promise that a preacher should be sent to Vermont. Accordingly, Joshua Hall was appointed in 1794, but did not go. Mr. Langdon went home, with a full purpose to seek the vital religion of which he had heard. He was satisfied, not only that salvation was free for all, but that it was the privilege of all to know their sins forgiven; and he sought by earnest prayer, and shortly experienced, the blessing of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He waited, with longing desire and fond expectations, for the preacher to come, but none arrived that year. He wrote and urged the Macedonian cry, "come over and help us;" and continued praying for the coming of the heralds of free salvation, but not until the Fall of 1796 was another preacher appointed.

Mr. Langdon, who was an excellent citizen, and a magistrate, became a useful local preacher, and aided extensively in the outspread of the new denomination in the state, laboring energetically and suffering much for it.* The next year after Mr. Sneathen's arrival, Mr. Clark heard a Methodist preacher for the first time at the house of Mrs. Peckett, which had become both the home and the chapel of the Itinerants. He was deeply impressed by the truths and spirit of the discourse. "About a year after," he writes, "another preacher came into the place, and was to preach in a school-house. I was from home;

*See Mem. of the Int. of Methodism, chap. xxxi., for an interesting incident in his early Methodist labors.

but hearing of the meeting, I started for home, and arrived at the school-house just as he closed his sermon. I heard him sing a hymn, and make his concluding prayer, which served to deepen my regret that I had missed the opportunity of hearing the sermon; for I verily believed there was something great and good to be learned from these men, and perhaps I might never have an opportunity again of hearing them; for I still supposed they came from England, and would not remain long in the country. A few weeks after, I was informed that Mr. Williston, the Methodist preacher, was to preach his farewell sermon the next Sabbath at Mr. Langdon's, in Vershire. The distance being about fifteen miles, I set out about sunrise, and got to the place some time before meeting commenced. The preaching was to be in a barn; the day was pleasant, and seats were prepared in and out of the barn. I saw where they had prepared for the preacher to stand, and took my position where I might see and hear to the best advantage. Under the first prayer, an arrow seemed directed singly to my heart, and I felt that I was the very person he was praying for, and that I was the sinner who needed prayers. I there and then resolved that I would try to be a better man. I saw people, men and women, in the barn and out of it, on their knees in time of prayer, and said to myself, This is the old Bible way; and my heart was drawn to these people so strongly, that when the second hymn was given out, I arose with them, and joined heartily in singing. What I saw and heard through the day met my entire approbation, and I went home with a fixed determination to live a new life. But how and where to begin I knew not. I was in perfect darkness: my sins began more than ever to stare me in the face; my own responsibility was the only thing that seemed clear to my view, but this was in direct opposition to the doctrine of moral necessity, behind which I had been accustomed to screen myself and lull my conscience — the effect of a well-meant but wrong education. I was led to review the whole subject, and settled it in my own mind that all speculations must give place to this one truth, 'that every man must give an account of himself to God, and receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil.'"

Nearly all the early converts of Methodism in New England had a similar struggle with the errors of their religious education. Mr. Clark continues, — "For more than three months I remained in a state of darkness, and, like a blind man, was trying to feel my way, and yet knew not which way to direct my steps. My business led me a good deal into company, but I was no companion for old or young, saint or sinner. The doctrine of predestination became so offensive that, to the grief of my father, I refused to go to church where it was preached, and he accused me of turning heathen. The latter part of November, I was informed that a young preacher had come to Mrs. Peckett's, and would preach that afternoon. I left my work, and went to hear him; his text was, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' He dwelt upon the ample provision in the atonement; the liberty of all to come; the manner of coming by faith; that the sinner was to come because he was a sinner, and not tarry to make himself better; and, in conclusion, sung the hymn, 'Come ye sinners, poor and needy,' &c. Here the first light was shed upon my mind, and this was the first consistent view that presented itself to my understanding of a sinner's coming to Christ. It was several weeks before I had an opportunity of hearing him again. When the preacher, J. Crawford, returned, he came to visit my father's family. They collected together; the Itinerant gave an exhortation and prayed, and in taking leave he took each person by the hand, and addressed a few words to him individually. When he came to me, I was so affected that I could not refrain from weeping. He held on to my hand, exhorting me to receive Christ by faith, and, lifting up his voice, he prayed earnestly for the Lord to bless me. Of a sudden my burden was gone, my tears ceased to flow, and I felt a perfect calmness. I was unable to account for the change: I walked to the barn; wondered at myself, for my mind was as easy and free as if I had never had a thought that troubled me. The path of duty appeared plainer than I had ever seen it before, and my purpose was stronger to pursue it. I was sensible that I had gained some victory over myself and sin; but what to call it I knew not; but it occurred to my mind that it was writ-

ten, 'Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord,' and I was greatly encouraged. About four weeks after, the preacher proposed to hold a Class meeting to converse with those who were seriously disposed; a number stayed, and before the meeting closed I felt to say, I can, I do believe! — I felt a happiness that I never felt before, and God gave me the witness of my acceptance with Him. At this time a Class was formed, and I gave myself to God and to his church. Our numbers increased gradually, and we enjoyed precious seasons in our little society, though not without opposition. I felt it my duty to converse with my young associates, and many became serious, and were anxious to hear."

In 1799 Joseph Crawford was returned to Vershire circuit, with Elijah Chichester. The circuit embraced a large extent of country, including Orange and Windsor Counties, and societies were formed in most of the towns between the river and the Green Mountain ridge. Many converts from the different towns came together at the Quarterly Meetings which were held for that year in Vershire, Bradford, Barre, and West Thedford. Feeling a deep interest in the church, Mr. Clark became acquainted with many of those who embraced Methodism, especially with the Langdon families. John Langdon was looked up to as a leader and father among the societies, and was the first licensed local preacher in the east part of Vermont. "I became strongly attached to him," writes Mr. Clark; "he acted the part of a friend to me, and we enjoyed seasons of religious comfort together."

Thus was young Clark introduced experimentally to a knowledge of the Gospel as expounded by Methodism. He soon after, quite unexpectedly and providentially, began to speak in public, and thus entered upon his long and useful career as a preacher of righteousness. On a visit, in 1800, to Wentworth, N. H., he was requested to meet a few friends in the evening and give them an account of his new views. He found a large assembly present; he introduced the interview with singing and prayer, and then delivered an address, in which he was, as he believed, divinely assisted. The clergyman of the village was

present, and disputed his opinions, but, as the people thought, with visible disadvantage; for the young Methodist had read thoroughly Mrs. Peckett's Wesleyan books, and had become an adept in the logic of Wesley and Fletcher.

Soon after, he accompanied John Langdon, then a local preacher, and Rosebrook Crawford, an exhorter, on one of those evangelical excursions which were common among the zealous Methodists of that day. They passed through a number of towns, preaching, exhorting, and praying, and were successful in founding several of our present flourishing societies. In Landaff they had two appointments. "We arrived at the first," he writes, "at two o'clock, in good time, and Bro. L. preached to a very attentive congregation. We then rode several miles further for the evening, where we met a large congregation, to whom Bro. L. preached in the demonstration of the spirit, and the people were greatly moved; he called on me to follow with exhortation, which I did. Many were weeping, and we could not close the meeting till near midnight; numbers appeared to be truly awaked; some cried aloud for mercy, and a few rejoiced in the Lord. The next day we set off for Lunenburg; visited several families on our way, in Landaff, Lisbon, and Littleton, and arrived at our place of destination about sun-down. It being Saturday night, we circulated the appointment for the Sabbath, and had only a family prayer-meeting for that evening. Our meeting for the Sabbath was at 'Father Braden's,'—an old Irish Methodist. Langdon preached morning and afternoon, and I followed with exhortation. At the conclusion it was proposed to have a Class meeting, and all who were serious were invited to stay. The presence and power of the Lord were manifested, and five experienced the pardon of their sins, and rejoiced in God their Saviour. There were Mrs. Webb, her son Theodore, the two daughters of Father Braden, and the youngest daughter of Mr. Gustin, at whose house we had put up the night before. I accompanied Mrs. Webb to her house, for, knowing the feelings of Colonel Webb, I expected she would meet with opposition, and so I found it; but his wrath moderated, as he said, for the respect he had for my father. Here I

met their son Ashbel, who married a cousin of mine, that was brought up in my father's family. He also looked dissatisfied, and somewhat confused at meeting me; for he had not been at the meeting, nor did he know that I was in the place. I told him that I calculated to go to his house and stay that night. He could not refuse me; but I saw plainly he did not wish me to come. However, I took my horse after tea, and rode to his house. They received me hospitably, but coolly. I soon found he had prepared for disputation, for I observed his Bible lying on the table, with many leaves turned down. We commenced our conversation, and he brought up many objections against the Methodists and their doctrine. The next morning, as soon as light appeared, I arose, and he hearing me, got up and expressed a fear that I had not slept comfortably. I assured him that I had; but as the birds were beginning to praise God, I must praise him too. I saw that his heart was touched."

Ashbel, confounded in argument and relenting in heart, harnessed his horse, and carried the young Methodist to a staunch Calvinistic cousin, by the name of Savage, where the discussion was resumed. It concluded with prayer, after which "I informed them," says Mr. Clark, "that Mr. Langdon was to preach that night in Lancaster, and wished them to go and hear him. In the evening, both Webb and Savage, with their wives, were at the meeting, and many others. Mr. L. preached, I exhorted, and we kept up our meeting with singing and praying for some time, and the two men that I had brought with me, with their wives, were all four converted, and went home praising the Lord. We were now able to form a Class of between fifteen and twenty; the most of them remained steadfast in the Lord, and my friends, Webb and Savage, both became local preachers."

They passed another part of Lancaster, where a great agitation ensued. They were assailed by the mob. The ruffian rabble cowered before the courage of Langdon, who was a gigantic and brave man; but they carried off Rosebrook Crawford, and ducked him in the river, with shouts.*

*See an account of this affair in Mem. of Int. of Methodism, Chap. XXXI.

The excursion had been successful, and resulted in the formation of the old Landaff circuit of notable memory. The preacher in charge, on hearing of the results of the tour of Langdon and his companions, visited the same places, organized them into a distinct department of labor, and reported from them more than fifty members, at the next New York Conference. We have been the more particular in these details, as they illustrate not merely Mr. Clark's early religious life, but the primitive history of Methodism in Vermont — the data of which are fast passing into oblivion, and cannot be too carefully rescued.

From the Conference of 1800, Brodhead was appointed to New London district, which now extended from the seaboard to the Canada line. Timothy Dewey was sent to Vershire, John Nichols to Wethersfield, and Elijah R. Sabin to Landaff circuits. The preachers were late in getting to their circuits, and the Presiding Elder visited Vermont before either of the three arrived. Brodhead went immediately to Landaff, spent two or three weeks, preaching almost daily, and held his first Quarterly Meeting in that town.

Mr. Clark enjoyed much this occasion, and his conversations with the Elder tended to deepen the impression of his duty to preach the Gospel. Soon afterwards, he accompanied young Martin Ruter to the Vershire Quarterly Meeting. "We had," says Mr. Clark, "opened our feelings to each other on the subject of entering the ministry, and at this meeting the Presiding Elder preached, on Saturday, on the call, qualification, and duty of the Christian minister. The subject was applicable to our feelings; we were affected to tears, and our convictions of duty were confirmed. The Sabbath was a day of power. In the Love Feast, and in the public congregation, Mr. B. preached with Apostolic unction. I looked at him with reverence, and said to myself, This man speaks as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. Before he concluded, there were scores of persons lying upon the ground, as if slain in battle."

It was at this meeting that Brodhead pressed Ruter into the Itinerant service, as we have seen. A few months later, Clark was called out also, and, after accompanying the Elder some

weeks, was sent to assist the preachers of the circuits, especially those of Landaff and Vershire, where he met with a good reception, and had much success.

About the first of June, he started on horse-back for the New York Conference, a ride of 340 miles. Such had been the prosperity of these northern circuits, that they reported to the Conference from Vershire, 354 members; Landaff, 192; Wethersfield, 234; Hanover, 58; making an increase of 451. The three two-weeks' circuits of the last year were returned for four-weeks' circuits, and two new ones were added, viz.: Hanover for two preachers, and Barnard for one. In all there were now nine preachers, where there were but three the year before. The territory of the New York Conference, east of the North river, extended from Long Island to Canada; taking in all the State of Connecticut, so much of Massachusetts as lay west of Worcester, so much of New Hampshire as lay west of the Merrimac river, all of Vermont, and reaching into Lower Canada; six preachers were sent into Upper Canada. The whole number of preachers to supply this field was 58, and the whole number of members was 7401; giving an increase of 1109 members, and 16 preachers, in one year.

Mr. Clark was received on probation, at this session, and appointed to Fletcher circuit, Vt., with James Coleman. He had now fully entered the Itinerant ranks, and immediately learned the privations, as well as the labors, of the Methodist ministry. "My circuit," he says, "was divided in two parts, nearly like a figure 8, containing two weeks' appointments in each, and bringing us together every two weeks—the whole distance about 400 miles; including all that part of Vermont north of the Onion river, and in Lower Canada, from Sutton to Missisque Bay, and around the bay to Alsbury and Isle la Motte; embracing about forty appointments for four weeks."

After travelling nine months, he says, "I received three dollars only, and that to repair my boots. My spending money was exhausted, and I had borrowed five dollars of Mr. Coleman. At the Quarterly Conference, the question came up, how the money was to be divided. I told them that Mr. Draper, who

had been sent to the east after the Conference, had a family, and he must have his share. The Elder then asked me for my travelling expenses; I told him I had none, for I had but just entered upon regular work; he smiled, and told the steward to give me one dollar to pay for shoeing my horse, and for quarterage they paid me seven dollars, so that I had enough to pay what I had borrowed, and a little to spare."

Such privations, however, appeared only to give a deeper romance to the life of the Itinerant evangelists; they had devoted themselves as willing sacrifices for the souls of men, and were only inspirited by their trials.

Mr. Clark's subsequent appointments form a numerous and striking list. They were, in 1802, Plattsburgh, N. Y.; 1803, missionary in Lower Canada; 1804, Adams, Mass.; 1805, Lebanon, N. Y.; 1806, Whittingham, Mass.; 1807, Buckland, Mass.; 1808, Granville, Mass.; 1809 and 1810, Litchfield, Ct.; 1811, New York city, with Nathan Bangs, P. P. Sandford, Joseph Crawford, and others; 1813 and 1814, Troy, N. Y.; 1815, Pittstown, N. Y.; 1816 and 1817, Schenectady, N. Y.; 1818, New York city again, with Seth Crowell, Thomas Thorp, Aaron Hunt, B. Hibbard, S. Merwin, and other New England laborers; 1820 and 1821, Redding, Conn.; 1822 and 1823, Stratford, Conn.; 1824, New York district, on which he continued four years; 1828, he took charge of the New Haven district, and superintended it during the ensuing four years; 1832, agent for the Wesleyan University, Conn.; 1833 and 1834, New York city; in 1835, he was returned on the supernumerary list, but the next year he resumed active service, and was appointed to the Hartford district, which he travelled till 1841, when he was sent to Wethersfield, Conn. The following year he was again on the supernumerary list, and resided at Middletown, Conn. In 1843, he took an appointment, and labored at Stepney and Weston, Conn. The following four years, he superintended the New Haven district. In 1848 he was appointed to the Long Island district, which he still continues to travel.

Laban Clark has acted an important part in the history of New England Methodism; the time has not come for the full

delineation of his character and services, but the task will be a grateful one to the future historian of the church. More than three score years and ten — a half-century of which has been spent in tireless Itinerant labors — have impaired his vigor, and crowned him with the glory of the hoary head; but his zeal for the church is unabated; he loves it with that generous, devoted loyalty, which has characterized the old age, as well as the youth, of most of the noble men who helped to lay its foundations. While he has travelled and preached indefatigably, he has also labored for all the great interests of our cause. He was one of the chief founders of the Wesleyan University, and has always upheld the claims of education in the church. His pulpit discourses have been characterized by sound doctrinal and practical sense; his preaching has often been powerful, notwithstanding a marked vocal defect. In social life, he is cheerfully affable, and his conversation abounds in the reminiscences of our early history, of which he is a living and a worthy monument.

Mr. Clark is of medium stature; his head is silvered with age, but his countenance retains the vivacity of lively and vigorous faculties. With much practical sagacity, he has combined a characteristic speculative and theorizing capacity; and some of his schemes for the amendment of our complicated and unsymmetrical ecclesiastical system, if deemed too hypothetical to be practically experimented, have, nevertheless, not failed deeply to interest many of our leading minds.

Oliver Beale is another familiar name which appears on the Conference roll, for the first time, the present year. He has left many witnesses of his faithful ministry, especially in Maine. We regret that it is not in our power to present any adequate sketch of his life. He was born in Bridgewater, Mass., October 13, 1777, and converted in July, 1800, at Thomaston, Maine. He found in Methodism an ardent and congenial form of Christianity, and embraced it with all the warmth of his heart. The next year after his conversion, he was licensed as a local preacher, and was received as a probationer at the session of the Lynn Conference for the present year. His appointments were, in 1801, Readfield, Me., with Asa Heath; 1802, Falmouth, Me.; 1803,

Vershire, Vt., with Samuel Draper; 1804, Barre, Vt.; 1805, Vershire again. In 1806, he was returned to Maine, and travelled as Presiding Elder of Portland district. His successful administration led to his reäppointment to the same office, on the Portland and Kennebec districts, during twelve years. In 1818, he was placed among the supernumeraries, having been disabled, by lung fever, the preceding year. The following year, though still feeble, he took an appointment at Hallowell, Me.; 1820 and 1821, Hampden, Me.; 1822, supernumerary again; 1823 and 1824, Orrington, Me.; 1825 and 1826, the Piscataquis mission, the labors of which seriously injured his impaired constitution; 1827, Unity, Me.; 1828, Wiscasset, Me.; 1829, Augusta, Me.; 1830, Presiding Elder of Somerset district, which he travelled also the following two years. In 1833 he was placed on the superannuated list; the next year, however, he was transferred to the supernumerary list, where he continued, doing what service his exhausted health would allow, till his death. In March, 1836, he was attacked severely with pulmonary disease. He journeyed to the south for relief, but died in Baltimore, December 30, 1836, aged fifty-nine. "He died, as he lived, calm and peaceful."

Oliver Beale carried with him everywhere the visible evidence that he had been with Jesus and had learned of him, and for several of his later years, the "marks of the dying of the Lord Jesus." He adhered to his work while his physical energies lasted. He was eminently successful, and has many stars in his crown in heaven. His brethren of the Maine Conference say of him: "As a minister of the Gospel, he was uniformly pious, and devoted to the work; in prayer he was unusually interesting; in preaching he was instructive, and sometimes excelled."*

* Minutes, 1836-7.

CHAPTER XIII.

INCIDENTS AND RESULTS OF THE YEAR 1801–2.

Elijah R. Sabin. — Landaff Circuit. — Ebenezer Washburn. — Brandon Circuit. — Discipline. — Rencontres with Calvinism. — Persecutions. — Anecdote. — Middlebury. — Charlotte. — Starksboro'. — Hinesburg. — An Anti-Calvinistic Dutchman. — Laban Clark Itinerating in Vermont. — Statistics.

The ecclesiastical year 1801–2 was distinguished by great prosperity, and also by great conflicts. Elijah R. Sabin had been sent to the new Landaff circuit, in Vermont, formed, as we have seen, by Joseph Crawford, after the excursion of John Langdon and Laban Clark. His labors were unintermitted, and in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. But he sunk under them, and was compelled to retreat from the field for three years, to recruit his exhausted energies. He had scattered broad-cast the good seed; and though, when he left the Conference, two years before, to go to his new circuit, he had to inquire and seek after it, as an unknown portion of New England, and found on his arrival but a small class in Landaff, yet now, as he departed with broken health, he bore with him the report of one hundred and sixty-four members, more than a hundred of whom had been gathered into the societies through his labors.

Ebenezer Washburn was appointed, as we have seen, to Brandon circuit, Vt., a new range of travel, which was detached this year from Vergennes circuit. The prudent men of the ministry found it necessary, in that day of the infancy of the church, to maintain a stringent discipline. Many persons were attracted by the novelty of the new sect; some joined it from mere resentment to the "standing order," and others from a sympathy with its liberal doctrines, but without a renewal of their hearts and lives. During the first six months of his travels

on Brandon circuit, Mr. Washburn resolutely applied the disciplinary tests of the church, well knowing that the purity of its character was the only guarantee of its permanent success. He expelled in that time no less than thirty persons; but "in every case," he says, "the brethren sustained me, and the Lord gave me on probation about ten more than we had lost." Mr. Washburn had, in common with nearly all his brethren in New England, to meet almost everywhere the hostility of the prevalent theological opinions. They not only assailed the new cause from the pulpit, but had infected the people with a religious dogmatism, which often broke out in their social meetings and private intercourse. "Here, too," he writes, "I was compelled to be a man of contention. If I presented Christ to the people as having tasted death for every man, that was strenuously opposed by the doctrine of partial atonement. If I called on sinners to repent and believe the Gospel, I was told that a sinner could not repent till he was converted. If I preached the knowledge of sin forgiven, that was wild and dangerous fanaticism. Indeed, the whole budget of Calvinian election and reprobation, with all its concomitant train of errors, was ready to oppose every point of truth in the Gospel system of a free, a known and a full salvation. It is true, a Crawford and a Mitchell, who had preceded me on that ground, had taught the clergy that it was not safe for them to meet the Methodist preachers before the congregations; but the deacons and some of the leading members would, once in a while, risk a debate, while the clergy, from their own fastnesses, kept up a weekly cannonading against the Methodists. And the Methodist preacher who did not labor first to clear the rubbish out of the way, labored in vain to build the wall. I do not recollect any of our preachers now living, except our venerable Bishop Hedding and Laban Clark, who were personally acquainted with the labors, toils and opposition, which Methodist preachers had to contend with in Vermont at that time. I have had stones and snowballs cast at me in volleys. I have had great dogs sent after me, to frighten my horse, as I was peacefully passing through small villages. But I was never harmed by any of them. I have been saluted with

the sound of 'Glory, hosanna, amen, hallelujah!' mixed with oaths and profanity. If I turned my horse to ride toward them, they would show their want of confidence, both in their master and in themselves, by scattering and fleeing like base cowards. I preached one evening in Rutland, in an old, empty building, which had formerly been occupied for a distillery (the best church the Methodists could get to preach in at that time in Rutland), on the future punishment of the wicked. When I sat down, a man professing Universalism, and somewhat addicted to intemperance, came and stood before me, and said, 'You have been preaching a pack of lies to the people.' — 'If I have,' said I, 'I have placed myself in a bad situation; for all liars, as well as all drunkards, are exposed to hell fire.' With that, he raved and smote his fists together, and said I had insulted him, and if I did not give him satisfaction, he would take it out of my hide. I looked upon him with a smile, and said, 'Friend, if you take any pleasure in beating your fists over my head, I don't know that I shall object to it; but as I am a man subject to like passions with other men, I advise you to be very careful not to let them touch me, lest I should do that which both you and I should be sorry for.' At that moment one cried out, 'I guess there will be good done here this evening, for the devil is mad.' The man was seized that instant, and hurried toward the door. I requested the people to let him alone; but I could avail nothing. They pitch-poled him from one to another, scarcely letting him touch the ground for the space of thirty feet, or more, till he was out of the congregation. I was following on, and crying, 'Don't hurt the man! don't hurt the man!' That man experienced religion soon after, and became one of the warmest friends I had in the region of Rutland."

Transferences from one district to another, by the Presiding Elder, were very common in those days. After laboring some time on Brandon circuit, Mr. Washburn was sent to that of Vergennes, which now comprised twelve appointments, and one hundred and forty miles' travel in two weeks. He has recorded several reminiscences of his labors during the present year, on

this circuit. They are mostly personal, but throw some light upon the times, and the infancy of now flourishing societies.

"In Middlebury," he says "I found a small and persecuted Class. Our preaching place was at the house of Lebbeus Harris; and in the midst of that village our average congregation was from twenty-five to thirty. Mr. and Mrs. Harris were deeply pious, and were ready to greet the preacher with joy at his coming, and to render him every service and accommodation to make him comfortable and happy while he stayed." At Middlebury we have now a prosperous society of nearly two hundred members.

"At Charlotte, I found a large congregation, but no regular Class formed. There was Major Jonathan Brakenridge and his wife, who had experienced religion at a Quarterly Meeting a few weeks before, and in the Love Feast had requested their names to be taken down as probationers. Mr. Ryan had taken their names, but had not attached them to any particular Class. On the second time of my visiting Charlotte, I formed them and five others into a Class, which stood firm against the rage of persecution and opposition." This society continues still to hold on its course.

"In Starksboro' I found a good society. The house of old Brother Bushnell was the preaching house, and the preacher's home. The family were mostly professors of religion, and members of the Methodist church; and those that were not were very kind and friendly, even down to the little grand-children. The old lady professed the blessing of sanctification, and delighted in conversing on the holy theme of perfect love. I was always glad when the time came to preach and spend a night at Brother Bushnell's. At Hinesburg there was also a good society, containing several warm-hearted brethren and sisters. The house of Brother Peck, who was a leader and circuit steward, was the principal home for the preachers; but I found it good and profitable for me to visit from house to house." Starksboro' and Hinesburg have been detached from the circuit, and now form a distinct field of labor, including nearly two hundred and fifty members.

Such are examples of Mr. Washburn's success on this circuit;

but though he was thus prospered in his labors, and founded several societies, the theological prejudices which he had to combat elsewhere met him here also. His shrewd tact and Scriptural resources in debate usually gave him the advantage in such rencontres. If the Methodist Itinerants generally found the people, as well as the clergy, obstinately pertinacious of these prejudices, circumstances often occurred, which, appealing to the natural sense or natural affections of the popular mind, recoiled effectually against them. Mr. Washburn relates an incident of this kind, which occurred the present year, on Vergennes circuit, and which, while it showed how the instincts of a sound though rugged mind spontaneously repel unnatural errors of opinion, resulted also in the formation of a society: "At Hinesburg Hill, I put up at Brother Norton's, who was also a leader and steward; and I think I have seldom found a man and woman more fully devoted to God than Mr. and Mrs. Norton. In this place there was a small, but very loving society. About three miles from it was a wealthy Dutchman, by the name of Snyder, who had a large family; his youngest child, an interesting little girl, about four or five years old, sickened, and suddenly died. They called a preacher to attend the funeral, who preached a pointed Calvinistic sermon, which did not much please the Dutchman. When the preacher turned his address to the afflicted parents, he told them there were at least nine chances for their child to be lost to one for it to be saved. The father's heart could bear no more; he gave a heavy stamp with his foot, and said, 'Hold your tongue! I will have no such talk in my house; I am so well satisfied where my little babe has gone, that, by the grace of God, I intend to do just so as to go to it.' He then turned to Mr. Norton, and said, 'Neighbor Norton, won't you bring a Methodist preacher to see me?'—Mr. Norton said, 'I will, if you request it.'—'When will you bring one?' said he.—Mr. N. said, 'I expect one at my house to-night; I think it probable I can come here with him to-morrow morning.'—'Do,' said he. The child was buried without further ceremony. The next morning Mr. Norton and I went to see him. The whole family were collected together, and I conversed with each

one separately, gave a general exhortation, and prayed with them, and then left an appointment to preach there in two weeks, and went on my way rejoicing. When I came round again, I found the man, and his wife, and several of their children, earnestly seeking the salvation of their souls. I preached to them, and a goodly number of their neighbors. The Lord was with us, and owned and blessed his word. The old gentleman, his wife, and some of their children, experienced religion, and joined the Methodists; and when I left the circuit, I left a flourishing Class in that place, of which Brother Snyder was the leader. It gave me much joy to learn, from his obituary notice, that Brother Snyder maintained a Christian walk, filled the offices of leader and steward with fidelity and usefulness, and died in the triumphs of a Gospel faith. O, how mysterious are the ways of Providence! If it had not been for that Calvinistic sermon, and almost blasphemous address at the funeral of the child, the probability is that I should never have seen that family or neighborhood."

Such instances of encouragement, under their almost insupportable embarrassments, were not uncommon to the indomitable evangelists of those times.

Laban Clark labored successfully, some months of this year, on Fletcher circuit, Vt. Such is the paucity of our information respecting that period of our history, and the rapidity with which it is passing into oblivion, that every illustration of it, however slight, becomes interesting, if not valuable. We have obtained mere glimpses of Mr. Clark's labors during the year. "In the first quarter, I went," he says, "three times around the circuit, not only filling all the regular appointments, but visited and preached in several new places, where the preachers had never been. Although the country was new, the roads bad, or none at all, the accommodations poor, and sometimes the fare scanty, yet I enjoyed myself well, and felt my heart united with the people. My only object was to do them good, and be the means of saving souls from death. I had the satisfaction of seeing numbers awakened and converted to God; and the Lord gave me favor with his saints. Our second Quarterly Meeting was in Essex. On Saturday evening, the Presiding Elder asked me

if I had all my things with me. I told him I had left most of them at Missisque Bay, in Canada. He said the preachers ought always to be ready, at the second Quarterly Meeting, to change, and I must go on in two weeks to Brandon circuit. My Vergennes appointments being already given out, in the north part of the circuit to the bay, where I must be the next Sabbath, he directed me to take that route, and after the Sabbath to come right on to Brandon. But I had an appointment for the Tuesday following the Sabbath, at St. Alban's Point, a new place, where I had been once, and where several persons were awakened. I went on, and filled all the appointments till I came to this new one at the 'Point.' We had the house full; I preached with great freedom, and many were weeping. After preaching, I proposed to have a Class meeting; a number stayed, and several found peace in believing. I formed them into a Class, and we had a melting time. The next morning they all came together, and I took my departure from them with many tears. I went to Fairfax; met the steward, and settled my accounts, he paying me $18, making in all, for the six months, $25. Henry Ryan was removed from Vergennes to Pittsfield; Ebenezer Washburn, from Brandon to Vergennes, and I had come to fill his place. Notwithstanding these frequent changes, and the short time preachers remained in a circuit, the attachments formed between the preachers and the people were often very strong, and their partings very painful. This was the case between the people and Mr. Washburn, on this circuit, and I was fearful that I should not be cordially received among them; but I found them kind and affectionate, and God gave me favor among them. Mr. Draper, my colleague, was a hearty and willing laborer, and we agreed to enlarge our circuit, by taking another week's appointment, and, as we called it, 'break up new ground.' I set off through Sudbury, Whiting, Shoram, Orwell, Benson, and obtained appointments in all these towns, so that our circuit embraced the whole country between the lake and Green Mountains, from Salisbury to Danby; and the preachers met every two weeks in Rutland. Our labors were

incessant; but God comforted our hearts, and prospered the work of our hands." *

It was not usual, in those days, for young preachers on probation to attend the Conference. Mr. Clark continued, therefore, his labors during the absence of the other Itinerants, and passed on to their vacated places; so that, by the end of the ecclesiastical year, he had preached in almost every town of Vermont west of the mountains. Most of the places mentioned as visited by him for the first time this year received his message, and are now the seats of flourishing churches.

Such are the few and very imperfect notices we have been able to procure of the labors of Methodism at this time in Vermont. They had been greatly successful; the spiritual indifference and inveterate theological prepossessions of the people gave way before the sturdy logic and powerful preaching of the unfaltering Itinerants, and wide-spread religious interest prevailed wherever they directed their travels. The result was the report, at the next Conference, of an aggregate membership in the state of 2127, being a gain on the preceding year of 520.† The circuits were extended on every hand, and some of them subdivided into new tours of ministerial travel; the year began with seven, it closed with ten.

The faithful and suffering evangelists of Maine had but little increase the present year; but they were profitably employed in disciplining their recent societies, and systematizing their labors, so that they reported ten circuits at the next Conference — a gain of three. The Itinerants in New Hampshire had been more successful. The aggregate returns from that state were 675, affording a net gain of 151. One circuit had been added to the four with which the year began. Massachusetts returned 1908 members — a gain of 245. It now comprised twelve circuits and stations; two had been added during the year. Methodism still advanced slowly in Rhode Island. Its returns for the year were 312 — its increase, 85. Connecticut reported 1658 — an increase of 91.

* Communication to the author.

† We omit Cambridge circuit, which was partly in Vermont.

The total membership in New England, including Cambridge circuit, was, at the end of the ecclesiastical year, 8605 — the total gain, 1629. The Methodists of the Eastern States were now nearly one-tenth of the whole church in the United States and Canada; and their increase this year amounted to nearly one-eighth of the gains of the denomination.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONFERENCES OF 1802.

New York Session. — Its New England Character. — Bostwick and Brodhead. — Returns from the Circuits. — Merwin. — Sabbath Services. — Asbury and Whatcoat at New Rochelle. — Their Passage to Maine. — At General Lippett's. — Arrival in Maine. — Progress of Methodism in the Province. — The New England Conference. — Returns from the Circuits. — Finances. — Incidents of the Session. — Return of the Bishops. — Their Visit at Waltham.

The New York Conference for 1802 commenced its session, in the city of New York, on Tuesday, the first day of June. Asbury, accompanied by Whatcoat, arrived there in the preceding week, wearied by nearly four thousand miles travel, and almost daily sermons, within the last twelve months. "I have had," he writes, "great exercises in going through rains and continual labor; but have been blest with great peace, by my good and gracious God." And again he writes, "My soul hath been oppressed with deep and sore temptations; it may be thus, that I should not be lifted up at the prosperity of the church, and increase of ministers and members. I have a variety of letters, conveying the pleasing intelligence of the work of God in every state, district, and in most of the circuits, in the Union. Ride on, blessed Redeemer, until all the states and nations of the earth are subdued unto thy sacred sway!"

The Conference was held in the old John-street church, the first Methodist chapel erected in America. Asbury records, with pleasure, that its deliberations were conducted "in great peace and union," and rejoices over the large accession of "preachers on trial as travellers." There were no less than twenty-two such — about one-third of the whole number received by the seven Conferences of the year.

Saturday, the 5th, was spent as a day of solemn fasting and

prayer "for the church, the Conference, the continent and the world." Two sermons were preached; the first by John McClaskey, of honorable memory in the middle Conferences. In the evening Asbury discoursed on the influence of the ministry as "the savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish." "I preached," he writes, "with great plainness, and so much fire as made my earthly tabernacle very restless through the night."

There was a large representation of New England at this session. It was, in fact, a New England Conference, territorially; for twenty-six of its thirty-one appointments were either wholly or in part within the Eastern States.* Three of its four districts bore New England names, and comprised but two New York circuits, while nearly one-half of the circuits of the other district lay within New England. Of the sixty-one preachers who received appointments the present year, only eighteen were sent to places which bore New York names. It must be remarked, however, that the New York Conference did not, according to the Minutes, include, at this time, the Albany district.

Among the leading New England preachers present were Bostwick and Brodhead, who had travelled extensive districts during the year. Bostwick's quarterly tour reached from Connecticut into Canada, and he commanded a corps of fourteen devoted men, among whom were James Coleman, Elijah Chichester, Laban Clark and Ebenezer Washburn. Brodhead superintended the New London district, which extended from Long Island Sound into the interior of Vermont, and included among its indefatigable laborers such men as Joseph Crawford, Martin Ruter, Phineas Peck, Peter Vannest, Henry Eames, Thomas Branch and Elijah R. Sabin. A large portion of these preachers were at New York during the session, besides many others who are familiar to our history, as Thomas Sargent, Daniel Ostrander, Samuel Merwin, Peter Jayne, John Finnegan, William Thatcher, &c. Most of the Eastern preachers had encouraging news to report from their appointments. Merwin had

* We except from the estimate the Canada appointments, which were considered missions.

been prospered on Redding circuit, Conn., and returned two hundred and twenty-seven members — an increase of thirty-six since the last Conference. His labors had been largely useful to other churches, which then, as in later years, reaped most of the results of Methodist revivals in New England. He had been successful in New Haven especially, where he was instrumental in the conversion of several students, whose example led to a salutary religious interest in Yale College. Peter Moriarty had witnessed good results from his ministrations on Litchfield circuit, Conn., notwithstanding it was intrenched in Calvinistic exclusiveness. He returned three hundred and eight members — a gain of twenty-seven. Much interest had prevailed on Middletown circuit, Conn., and Elijah Bachelor reported three hundred and fifteen members — an increase of thirty-five. Truman Bishop and Thomas Branch had prospered on Vershire circuit, Vt., and returned three hundred and ninety-five: they had gained more than forty. New London and Pomfret circuit had been visited with special influences of the Spirit. Peter Vannest, who was appointed to it the preceding year, had been sent into Canada to aid the few Itinerants who were founding the church there; but Phineas Peck and James Annis sustained successfully its great labors, and reported more than six hundred members: they had gained nearly one hundred. Joseph Mitchell returned a gain from Pittsfield circuit, Mass., of forty-three. Joseph Crawford had labored alone, but energetically, on Barnard circuit, Vt., and its membership had advanced from forty to one hundred and sixty-one. John Nichols and Elijah Ward reported from Wethersfield, Vt., one hundred and eighty-eight being a gain of fifty-five; and Whittingham circuit, in the same state, had added to its last year's return of one hundred and ninety-one no less than eighty-two. From Hanover circuit, N. H., Reuben Jones reported a gain of nearly two hundred. Such were some of the reports of the year's results in the New England States. They hardly indicate, however, the success of the labors of these devoted men. Their cause was yet feeble and contemned; and when even many hundreds were awakened and converted on their long circuits, comparatively few were

gathered into their own societies. Other denominations, while they ceased not to assail them, very readily received their converts; and occasionally they had to expose and combat systematic stratagems of proselytism — a delicate task, which they, however, performed with their characteristic peremptoriness.

The Conference continued in session, examining members and candidates, receiving returns from the circuits, and holding public meetings for preaching every evening, till the end of the week. Sunday, the 6th, was "the great day of the feast." Much interest prevailed among the Methodists of the city. They were now nearly one thousand strong, and, with their families, afforded crowded congregations to the preachers. There was a Love Feast at eight o'clock, A. M.; preaching followed at ten, and the Lord's Supper was administered at twelve. In the John-street chapel "some good shakings," says Asbury, "went through the house; but there was nothing very signal." Collections were taken in all the churches, to make up the deficiency in the allowance of the preachers. Asbury preached on the subject from "Let all your things be done with charity." In the afternoon he assisted at a similar meeting in the Bowery church, and in the evening preached again at the North River church. "And so," he writes, after the laborious week of the Conference and the fatiguing services of the Sabbath, — "and so we closed our labors in the city. But instead of a page, it would require a volume to tell the restless tossings I have had, — the difficulties and anxieties I have felt about preachers and people, here and elsewhere, — *alternate joy and sorrow.* But I have been supported. I am done; I am gone. New York, once more, farewell!"

On Monday, the 7th, he was on his way to New England, still accompanied by Whatcoat. They paused, before crossing the boundary, at his favorite retreat in the family of the Sherwoods, near New Rochelle. They needed rest after the preceding six Conferences of the year, and their unintermitted travels over the Union. The venerable Asbury was not devoid of tenderness, or even poetical sentiment, notwithstanding the practical force of his character, and the almost military hardiness of his life.

Wearied in mind and body, he felt deeply the rural tranquillity and beauty around him during the two days of his rest at New Rochelle; for to him they were comparatively rest days, though he held a service on each of them. "How sweet," he writes, "to me are all the moving and still-life scenes which now surround me on every side! The quiet country houses; the fields and orchards, bearing the promise of the fruitful year; the flocks and herds; the hills and vales and dewy meads; the gliding streams and murmuring brooks: and thou, too, Solitude, — with thy attendants, Silence and Meditation, — how dost thou solace my pensive mind, after the tempest of fear, and care, and tumult, and talk, experienced in the noisy, bustling city! 'Where will they send me? — to Hampshire — to Rhode Island — to Connecticut — to Canada?' One preacher wishes to go where another dreads to be sent, and smiles at the fears of his more timid brother. 'But,' say the citizens, 'how shall *we* be supplied? Such an one will be too strict, and may put us out of order; a second will not keep the congregations together, and our collections will not be made; a third will not please, because he is not a lively preacher, and we want a revival of religion.' Ah! the half is not told of the passions, parties, hopes and fears, amongst the best of men, through ignorance and mistake."

On the day on which he took his departure from amidst the scenes that inspired these feelings, he gave a heartfelt expression of the impression they had produced, in a sermon on the beautiful passage of the psalmist, "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, oh Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power."

On the 9th they entered Connecticut, and passed on rapidly, but with continued preaching, towards Maine, where the New England Conference was to convene. Asbury's notices of their progress are too meagre to be satisfactory, and would hardly be deemed of sufficient importance to be inserted in a work of higher pretensions than our humble record. Scanty as they are, how-

ever, they have a local interest for the places referred to in them, and are too precious to be wholly omitted.

"On Wednesday, 9th," he writes, "we were at James Banks', Byram River. Bishop Whatcoat preached: I only exhorted and read a letter. Next day I preached at *the Old Well*, at Absalom Day's, near Norwalk, upon Acts 3: 26. I had to walk out at eight o'clock in the night to a crowded school-house. There has been a small stir here. Brother Whatcoat was very ill with a bilious fever. I was afraid of pushing him too swiftly. In Stratford we stopped at Elnathan Wheeler's, where our weary bodies and spirits were refreshed. Next morning we moved off in earnest, expecting to reach North Bristol; but, at the ferry, our courage was somewhat damped. The boat was fast aground, and the tide was low; nevertheless, the boat from the other side came to our relief, and carried us across Housatonic in six minutes. With the kind family of Mr. Jocelin we rested two hours in New Haven. I was pleased to hear that the students of Yale College, as many as ninety or one hundred, had been under gracious impressions. They would come to hear the Methodists, and, like other *very genteel* people, mock and deride. But God struck some of the vilest of them, by the ministry of Samuel Merwin.

"Sunday 13th, at West Haddam I preached to a few. There had been no notice. Bishop Whatcoat, feeble as he was, spoke in the afternoon. I read some letters, giving an account of the prosperity of the work of God, south and west. This has been a trying week to body and soul and spirit. I have made out four hundred and twenty miles, exceedingly rocky and rude. Should I live to be as old as Mr. Wesley, and travel as long as he did, yet shall I never see a Maryland in Connecticut. In West Haddam our people have nearly finished their meeting-house. It has a most excellent pulpit, and a neat sanctuary round it, simply enclosed. We lodged with John Wilcox. He is faint, yet faithful, and waiting for the consolation of Israel, in holiness and glory. My soul is like a weaned child, — to do and to suffer; to make rest more desirable in pursuit, and more abundantly satisfying in the enjoyment. To say not a word about earthly things, my spirit has been greatly assaulted, and

divinely supported in grace, — in God, in Christ, — in the hope of *rest, rest, rest, eternal rest!*"

The Italics are his own, and are significant of the ideas which his ceaseless fatigues suggested, in association with his hopes of heaven. To such a man there must have been a peculiar meaning and beauty in the promise of "the rest that remaineth to the people of God."

"On Monday," he continues, "we crossed to Connecticut river, and came to Middle Haddam, lodging at Elisha Day's; but it is night in this place, — a little meeting-house, a little society, and little religion. Tuesday, 15, I preached upon Acts 8: 6, — 'And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.' I inquired *how* the Apostles 'preached Christ.' To sinners, the *atonement:* to be apprehended by faith, preceded by repentance: in believers, the 'hope of glory.' It was observed that it appeared, according to the Divine attributes of justice, mercy, truth, and love, that there must be a general provision for all; such as are in God prove it must be so. 'Preached Christ' as the anointed of God; a prophet, priest, and king, generally and personally, in his operations of grace. The people were attentive. After preaching, I ordained Jeremiah Stocking a deacon. Wednesday, 16, we dined at Lyme, and rode on to New London. Brother Whatcoat preached on 2 Cor. 6: 5; the house was crowded, and the young men and boys very disorderly. We lodged at Richard Douglass'. Thursday, 17, we had a pleasant ride to Norwich. Behold! the temple hath been burnt down, and more elegantly rebuilt, since I was here. Thus have they made a benefit of a calamity. Bishop Whatcoat preached upon *Christ's love for the church:* I read a letter and prayed."

On Saturday they arrived at General Lippett's, in Cranston, the Methodist head-quarters of Rhode Island. The next day they had a general gathering of the church from all the vicinity. Asbury opened the meeting at half past ten, A. M., with a sermon. "In my improvement," he says, "I showed the character and offices of Moses compared with Christ: the glory of Moses, and the superior glory of Christ: the letter and spirit of the

law, the letter and spirit of the Gospel; and I dwelt largely upon the latter. Plainness of speech, simple and searching; pointed to every case and character. My work was imperfect: I had not time, and, perhaps, not skill, to finish and properly apply so great a subject."

He then ordained several preachers, who had not been able to attend the New York Conference, and could not go to the distant New England session, in Maine. The administration of the Lord's supper followed the ordination service, and Whatcoat concluded the morning exercises by a sermon on "the unsearchable riches of Christ." A number of preachers were present from the nearest circuits, four of whom, according to a general usage of the times, followed the sermon with exhortations — and the services of the day closed not till four o'clock in the afternoon.

On Monday they pressed forward about twenty-eight miles, to Attleboro', Mass., and the next day, "after a heavy, hungry, weary, thirsty ride," they reached Boston. Fatigued as they were, Asbury had to yield to the importunity of the feeble band of Methodists in the metropolis, and in the evening ascended their rude pulpit in Hanover avenue, and encouraged them with a sermon. On Wednesday he was at Lynn. Notice of his coming had been spread through the town; the people assembled, and he admonished them in the language of the prophet, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."

The next day their course was still onward. "We reached," says Asbury, "Marblehead. Brother Whatcoat preached; I gave an exhortation: our audience, chiefly females, nearly filled the room. Mr. Boller is our good friend (but not a brother), in lending his own house, and assisting us largely in building ours for the worship of God. Saturday, 26, at Salisbury, Brother Whatcoat gave us a lecture on 1 John 5: 4. Sunday, 27, we had a Love Feast at Jemima Eaton's; a sermon at the meeting-house, and administered the Sacrament. I spoke on Zech. 12: 10. Brother Whatcoat in the afternoon, from 2 Cor. 5: 20.

Joshua Taylor preached in the evening. It was hard labor, and by no means agreeable to me to preach in other people's houses; to which I may add, that I was under bodily and spiritual infirmity. It is our duty to suffer and to serve: and it is true that we submit to the one, and will, by grace, do the other. We feel the prejudices of the people. They may think we wish to invade their rights; but indeed they are mistaken, for I would rather preach under a tree. Monday, 28, we came away in haste to Wells; and thus one day's ride of fifty-one miles brought us across the State of New Hampshire."

On Tuesday, the 29th, they reached Falmouth, near Portland; and though they had rode thirty miles, Asbury preached in the evening. The next day, after "a racking ride of about forty-five miles," they entered Monmouth, where the session of the Conference was to begin the following morning.

On Thursday, July 1, 1802, began the second session of the New England Conference in Maine. The first was held at Readfield, in the year 1798.* About four years had intervened; they had been years of severe struggle and suffering to the travelling ministry, but of great results also. Maine still continued to be a single district, but its six circuits, reported at the first session, had increased to ten, and its ten Itinerants to eighteen, while its membership had gained more than one-third. If it was still the day of small things, it was, at least, a day of large hopes. Only about seven years had elapsed since Lee organized, in the town where the Conference met, the first Methodist church of Maine; there were now more than 1400 Methodists in the Province — the average increase per annum had been more than two hundred.

The session was held "in the upper room of Sewell Prescott's house."† There were present, according to Asbury, fifteen members and nine probationers. The manuscript records give but fourteen members, viz.: George Pickering, Joshua Taylor, Ralph Williston, Timothy Merritt, Aaron Humphrey, and Joseph Snelling, *Elders;* Epaphras Kibby, Comfort C. Smith,

* Memorials of Introduction of Methodism, &c., chap. XXVIII.
† Asbury's Journals, Anno 1802.

Asa Heath, Reuben Hubbard, Daniel Webb, *Deacons;* Nathan Emery, Joseph Baker, and John Gove, eligible to Deacon's orders; Samuel Hillman, Daniel Ricker, and Daniel Jones were present, and received on trial. Daniel Perry and Allen H. Cobb, though not present, were also received as probationers. Oliver Beale, who was present, having travelled one year, was continued on trial.

The reports from the circuits showed good, but not extraordinary progress. Taylor, Pickering, Snelling, and Webb, were the only preachers present from Massachusetts; their returns of members varied but little from those of the preceding session. Boston had lost; the desperate but patient struggle of Methodism in the metropolis was still to be prolonged. Pickering reported a slight loss, also, from Lynn. Snelling returned a small increase from Needham circuit. Provincetown, Sandwich, and Nantucket, remained as at the last reports. The preachers from Maine brought more encouraging news. Joshua Taylor, though appointed at the preceding Conference to Boston district, had spent about half the year in Maine, superintending its circuits.* An interesting revival had prevailed at Vienna (then Goshen), and his Quarterly Meetings "generally had been seasons of great interest, and sometimes were attended with great power from on high, in the awakening and conversion of sinners. The people often rode on horseback, then the usual conveyance, ten, twenty, or even thirty miles, to attend these meetings." Timothy Merritt, Oliver Beale, Nathan Emery, and most of their colleagues, had some good news to report, as well as perilous winter adventures, and no little suffering. There had been but ten of them in the whole province during the year, but they had added three large circuits to their field of labor.

Asbury says, the "business was conducted in great peace and order." Three of the little band solicited locations; John Merrick's request was granted; Timothy Merritt's was refused; he was yet young, being only in his twenty-seventh year, and notwithstanding his unusual abilities, felt depressed and discouraged by a sense of unfitness for the great responsibilities

* Letter to the author.

of the ministry. He deemed himself particularly "deficient as a disciplinarian." "His brethren, however," adds the old Conference record, "believed it to be a temptation; and as they were unwilling to lose him from the travelling connection, he consented to take an appointment." Ralph Williston's request for a location was also refused, and he consented, with some temporary accommodations, to retain his charge of the Maine district.*

The financial accounts of the Conference show the usual deficit in the allowances of the preachers. Feeble as the church still was, it would seem that extended circuits, comprehending many towns, and supplied usually by but two preachers each, ought to have been able to meet their full pecuniary claim — the pittance of eighty dollars besides travelling expenses, especially as the latter item was usually very small. The records show, however, that out of twenty preachers whose accounts are rendered, only one, George Pickering, received full payment. When it is considered that out of these twenty claimants only six were married, the extremely limited resources of the church become strikingly apparent.† Timothy Merritt had received during the year $63.50; Epaphras Kibby, $35.50; Joshua Soule, $45.36; Daniel Fiddler, who, as we have noticed, had paused on his way from Nova Scotia to aid the New England preachers, received only $32.25, the smallest amount recorded. He had suffered well, as a volunteer, the privations of the New England Itinerancy for two years, and was allowed now to retreat southward to his original and more favorable fields of labor in the Middle States. Comfort C. Smith is recorded as having "preached gratuitously;" a qualification that might with hardly

* One of Mr. Williston's motives for wishing to locate, as given in the MS. records, was ill health; another, a desire to enter into secular business. He did not continue much longer in the onerous labors of the Itinerancy. He left New England at the end of this Conference year, was appointed to New York city, and to one or two places in Maryland; after which he successively joined the Lutheran and Protestant Episcopal churches. As we write this note (March, 1851), the newspapers announce his death, in his 81st year. He died in the Protestant Episcopal church. Mr. Williston was the first Secretary of the New England Conference; the early records are in his hand-writing.

† MS. records. The married preachers were Joseph Snelling, Aaron Humphrey, Daniel Webb, Asa Heath, John Merrick, and George Pickering.

a figure of speech, have been written against all the other names. The aggregate deficiency was not less, in proportion to the number of preachers, than at the preceding session: there were then twenty-two claimants, and a deficit of $689; at the present session there were twenty claimants, with a deficit of $651. Asbury knew the privations of the New England Conference, and had brought with him some aid for its faithful preachers. The Baltimore Conference, still remembering its maternal relation to the eastern churches, sent by him $185 "as a present," and the New York Conference sent $20; about $35 had been collected on the circuits, and the chartered fund yielded $90. Eighteen of the preachers present gave $2 each, so that about one-half of the deficit was met by these extra contributions. Thirty dollars are recorded as "divided between several young preachers who were needy." Asbury remarks, that "the married preachers who came to the Conference received about $120, the single brethren about $62, and the probationers a small donation of $2 each, which came from far."

These are minute facts, but we cannot appreciate justly the times or the men, without them. If the reader thinks we view them with a microscopic eye, he should remind himself that in a few drops of water the microscope discerns a world of real, not imaginary life.

During the session there was preaching daily. On Saturday, Joseph Baker, John Gove, Samuel Hillman, and Gilman Moody (a local preacher, and the first lay Methodist of Maine), were ordained Deacons, by Bishop Whatcoat. The Sabbath was a day of extraordinary interest; a great concourse of people assembled from many miles around. The chapel could not accommodate the multitude, and preaching was simultaneously held within its walls and in a neighboring grove. Five sermons were delivered during the day. A Love Feast was held in the morning, in which members of the societies in various parts of the province participated, and it is estimated that about one-sixth of all the Methodists of Maine communed together at the Sacrament of the Lord's supper.* Five members of the Confer-

* Conference MS. records.

ence — Epaphras Kibby, Daniel Webb, Asa Heath, Comfort Smith, and Reuben Hibbard — were ordained Elders, by Asbury; and so limited was yet the ministry, that all the Elders present joined him in the imposition of hands. The ordination service was performed in the open air, in the presence of about three thousand spectators. The candidates "kneeled," says Asbury, "outside at the door of the house — may they open the door of the church of God in discipline, and the way to heaven by preaching the Gospel." Asbury speaks of the day as an "open time, and some felt the word;" and Joshua Taylor says that "a number professed to find peace to their souls." *

The next morning, Asbury, accompanied by Whatcoat and Pickering, was, as usual, "off early and in haste," on his southward and westward route over the country. They rode forty-five miles before night, and the next day pressed onward, reaching Epping, N. H., where they tarried a day, and held "meetings at Captain Fogg's." Asbury preached a sermon on the Christian virtues befitting old age; and Pickering, in the evening, discoursed on the general lack of vital religion. They passed on rapidly, the next day, to the home of Pickering, the family of Abraham Bemis, in Waltham, Mass. "We shall have a great opening in New Hampshire," says Asbury, as he leaves that state, "and a district formed there in a few years." The prediction was fulfilled in two years.

They spent two or three days with Pickering, amidst the rural quiet and beauty of Mr. Bemis' farm. It was the height of summer; the fields were in their richest maturity, and the retreat so entirely secluded by its amphitheatre of hills as seemingly to shut out all the world and its cares. Yet the trials of his office intruded upon him, even here. After "fasting, resting, and writing a little," he says, "I feel that fasting at my time of life, if only once a month, brings on such a dejection of spirits, I can hardly bear up under it. I have had lately two *official cordials*, ironically speaking. They know how to come at me, although four or five hundred miles distant. — Lord, help

* Communication to the author.

me to do and suffer all I ought to do and suffer for thee, thy church, and ministers!"

On the Sabbath, he preached twice in the chapel. On Monday, 12th, they rode to Milford. "We came," he says, "through Needham. George Pickering stopped to demand the church rates taken from the Methodists, amounting to one hundred dollars or upwards; this is to pay the Independent ministers, whose forefathers fled from Episcopal tyranny: yet, be it known unto all men, their children's children are risen up, and glory in supporting the Gospel *according to law*. Happy the descendants who condemn not themselves, by doing that which their ancestors disallowed! We lodged at Mr. Sterne's, at Milford."

On Tuesday, he reached Thompson, Ct., and, though sick "with bilious head-ache," and able to say but little, he preached "in Nichols' meeting-house," exhorting the young church to "hold fast its profession," "seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God."

"Wednesday, 14, I rode to Captain Lyon's, in Canterbury: after dinner, I continued on over the rocks and hills, to Windham. We had a meeting at Robinson's; I was able to preach upon Isaiah 55 : 6–7. Here God had wrought, and the people appeared to be very lively. Thursday, 15, we came to Hebron. Brother Burroughs attended me. The travelling preachers cannot leave their appointments. At four o'clock in the evening our new house in Hebron was consecrated: the subject, on this occasion, was chosen from Exod. 20 : 24. It was an open time. Saturday, 17, and Sunday, 18, we held a Quarterly Meeting for Litchfield circuit. The Sabbath day congregation was small, owing to the rain after the great heat. I spoke from 2 Thess. 3 : 1. We had feeling times and hearts, and a living Love Feast. In heat and in haste, we rode on to Colonel Burrell's, in Canaan, and there lodged."

By Tuesday, they had reached the homestead of Garrettson, at Rhinebeck, "where I make up," he writes, "four thousand miles, and have one hundred in advance towards the fifth thousandth I shall have made since the last of July, 1801. Of the little time we have may be judged by the length of our

rides, day after day; yet, at this speed must I go to meet the Conferences, and visit the principal societies. My soul is at times greatly drawn out in prayer."

They continued at Rhinebeck two days, on one of which he preached a sermon, and ordained Hibbard, who was now travelling that circuit. "We rested," he writes, "at Traveller's Rest, upon the solitary banks of Hudson, with my dear friends, Freeborn Garrettson, and his prudent, pious wife." And on leaving them, he says, "I had to tear myself away from these precious souls; I do believe God dwells in this house (Traveller's Rest)."

He here again passes from our view, to pursue his southward route, as far as South Carolina, travelling and preaching in the same indefatigable manner which we have witnessed through his New England tour.

CHAPTER XV.

APPOINTMENTS AND PREACHERS.

Appointments of the New York Conference. — Of the New England Conference. — Preachers. — Elias Vanderlip. — Alfred Metcalf. — Philip Munger. — His early Life. — Appointments. — Character. — Death. — Samuel Draper. — His Appointments. — Death. — Character. — Humor of the early Methodist Preachers. — Its Cause. — Asa Kent. — His early History. — Anecdotes. — First Class at West Brookfield. — Appointments. — Character. — Samuel Hillman. — William Anson.

THE appointments in New England, for the year 1802–3, made by the New York Conference, were as follows:

PITTSFIELD DISTRICT. Shadrach Bostwick, *Presiding Elder*. *Pittsfield*, Moses Morgan and Elias Vanderlip; *Adams*, Samuel Merwin; *Cambridge*, Rogers Searle and Smith Arnold; *Brandon*, Ebenezer Stevens and Joshua Crowell; *Vergennes*, Elijah Chichester; *Fletcher*, Henry Ryan and Elijah Hedding; *Grande Isle*, William Anson; *Granville*, Ebenezer Washburn.

NEW LONDON DISTRICT. Daniel Ostrander, *Presiding Elder*. *New London*, Michael Coate and Aaron Hunt; *Tolland*, Elijah Batchelor and Alexander McLane; *Pomfret*, John Nichols and Samuel Gorsline; *Wilbraham*, Augustus Jocelyn; *Chesterfield*, John Gove and Nathan Felch; *Whittingham*, Elijah Ward and Asa Kent; *Athens*, Henry Eames.

VERSHIRE DISTRICT. John Brodhead, *Presiding Elder*. *Vershire*, Solomon Langdon and Paul Dustin; *Landaff*, Phineas Peck and Martin Ruter; *Lunenburg*, Thomas Branch; *Hanover*, Oliver Beale and Thomas Steele; *Bridgewater*, Reuben Jones; *Wethersfield*, Samuel Draper, Thomas Carpenter; *Woodstock*, Truman Bishop; *Barnard*, Joseph Crawford.

There were also, under the Presiding Eldership of Freeborn Garrettson, on the New York district, *Redding*, James Coleman

and Isaac Candee; *Litchfield*, James Campbell and Luman Andrus; *Middletown*, Abner Wood and James Annis.

The appointments made by the New England Conference were the following:

Boston District. Joshua Taylor, *Presiding Elder*. *Boston and Lynn*, Thomas Lyell and John Bloodgood; *Marblehead*, Epaphras Kibby; *Provincetown*, Edward Whittle; *Sandwich*, David Bachelor; *Nantucket*, Joseph Shane; *Greenwich and Warren*, Reuben Hubbard, Caleb Morris, Allen H. Cobb; *Needham*, Joshua Soule, Daniel Perry; *Salisbury and Hawke*, George Pickering and Daniel Webb; *East Kingston and Poplin*, Thomas Ravlin and Orin Fairbank.

Maine District. Ralph Williston, *Presiding Elder*. *Falmouth*, Asa Heath and Oliver Hall; *Poland*, Philip Munger; *Bethel*, Daniel Jones; *Readfield*, Joseph Snelling and Samuel Hillman; *Hallowell*, Comfort C. Smith and Aaron Humphrey; *Norridgewock*, Nathan Emery, Nehemiah Coye; *Bath*, Timothy Merritt and Joel Wicker; *Union*, Joseph Baker and Daniel Ricker; *Penobscot*, Asa Heath; *Union River*, Alfred Metcalf and William Goodhue.

The new ecclesiastical year commenced with *five* districts and part of a sixth; *forty-five* circuits and stations, and *eighty* preachers. There had been a gain, during the preceding year, of *one* district, *twelve* circuits, and *twenty-two* preachers. The new district was called Vershire, and comprehended three New Hampshire and five Vermont circuits.

We have been able to glean a few items of information respecting some of the preachers who received appointments this year for the first time.

Of the early life of Elias Vanderlip we know nothing, except that while yet a young man he was converted in New York, and joined the M. E. church in that city. It is said that he was several years a useful local preacher, before he entered the travelling connection. He joined the New York Conference the present year, and was appointed to Pittsfield circuit, Mass. After travelling this large circuit, he was sent to Cambridge, N. Y., and thence, the following year, to the city of Albany. In

1806 he located, but resumed his travels, the next year, on Ullster circuit, N. Y. The pecuniary provisions for the ministry were, as we have seen, entirely too limited, at that day, for the support of families. Mr. Vanderlip's was large, and suffered such privations that he was compelled again to locate in 1808, and enter into secular business, for their maintenance and education. During thirty years he continued in a local relation to the ministry; frequently laboring, meanwhile, in Albany and other places. "In 1838," say his brethren of the Troy Conference, among whom he died, "he again offered himself to the Conference, not with a view to do the church much service, but he had a great desire to die in the travelling connection. He voluntarily pledged himself to make no claim on the funds of the Conference. He was, at this time, over seventy years of age. The Conference admitted him, because they considered his age and venerable appearance an honor to their body. He was appointed to travel on Johnstown circuit; but such were his infirmities that he was obliged to retire from the work before the year closed. At the ensuing Conference, he took a supernumerary relation, and in 1840 was returned superannuated."

He continued on the superannuated list the remainder of his life. He is described as "a man of an excellent spirit, deeply pious, and very zealous. His talents as a preacher were respectable. He always delighted to dwell on the love of Jesus, — the freeness and fulness of salvation. His address was always warm and affectionate; and he was beloved by all who knew him. As he advanced in life, he seemed to grow in grace; and when, through manifold infirmities, he could no longer serve the church by any public labors, he still manifested a great interest in her prosperity. He was in a very happy state of mind for several years previous to his departure. He waited in joyful hope for his change to come, and used to say he was pluming his wings to take his flight. He died at the house of his son, in the city of Albany, Sept. 3, 1848, in the eighty-fourth year of his age."

Alfred Metcalf was received into the travelling connection

the present year.* He was born in June, 1777, and converted in 1800. At the New England Conference of 1802, he was appointed to Union River circuit, Me. His subsequent circuits were, Falmouth, Me.; Provincetown, Mass.; Salem, N. H.; Marblehead, Nantucket and Salisbury, Mass., and Portsmouth, N. H. He labored devotedly and successfully in those appointments, until his health failed, in 1810, when he located at Greenland, N. H.; but continued to preach, as he was able, until 1835, at which time he was reädmitted to the New Hampshire Conference, and appointed to Newington circuit. In 1836 he was stationed at Exeter, N. H. This was his final appointment. His last sermon was delivered at Greenfield, November 17th, after which his health rapidly declined, until June 4th, 1837, when he ascended to the church triumphant. The Minutes of that year say, that "He loved the doctrines and discipline of the church to which he belonged, and maintained them, by precept and example, until death. As a minister, companion, father and Christian, he felt a high sense of his responsibility, and well did he discharge the duties devolving on him in these several relations in life. His views in prospect of death were such as every faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ might expect. There was no anxiety manifested, at any time during his sickness, to recover, but a calm and cheerful resignation to the will of God. The doctrines which he had believed, and preached, and *lived*, he found abundant in their consolations. The night before he died, he was triumphant. When informed that he was dying, he pleasantly exclaimed, 'All is well — Christ is the hope of glory — God is with me!' and fell asleep."

Philip Munger, who is still well remembered among our churches, especially in Maine, entered the travelling ministry the present year. He was born of Baptist parents, in South Brimfield, Mass., in the year 1780. At the age of sixteen he heard the pioneers of Methodism in that region, and was led by their ministrations to the experimental knowledge of religion. After continuing in fellowship with the little society of Ashburnham some five years, he was licensed as a local preacher in

* Not in 1803, as his Obituary states, in the Minutes of 1837.

1801, and was soon called out by the Presiding Elder to travel on the Ashburnham circuit, a large field of labor, comprehending about sixteen towns. Here he devoted himself for several months to preaching, and visiting from house to house, in the ardor of youthful zeal, "calling upon the people to 'acquaint themselves with God,' that they might 'be at peace;' reminding them that 'there remained a rest to the people of God,' and urging them to 'enter in at the strait gate.'" *

He was received into the Conference in Monmouth, Me., the present year, and travelled successively the following circuits and districts; namely, Poland, Penobscot and Falmouth, Me.; Provincetown, Mass.; Barre, Vt.; Marblehead, Mass.; Conway, N. H.; Boston, Ashburnham, Mass.; Tolland, Pomfret, Conn.; Nantucket, Mass.; Harwich, Conn.; Poplin, Rochester, N. H., and Readfield, Me. The remainder of his life was spent in the Maine Conference, at Livermore, Kennebec district, Vassalboro', Fairfield, Thomaston and Belfast, Orrington and Bucksport, Windsor, Wiscasset, Buxton and Gorham, Durham and Lafayette.

In the year 1836, after about thirty-four years' faithful and arduous labors, during which he aided essentially in promoting Methodism in New England, he was compelled, by age and infirmities, to retire into the supernumerary ranks, and the following year was returned among the "superannuated," where he continued some nine years. At the Maine Conference of 1846, he again became effective, and was appointed to Wayne. It was somewhat doubtful whether he could sustain the labors of his new charge; but he entered upon them with a devoted purpose to save, "as out of the fire," a few more souls, even if he should sacrifice himself in the endeavor. His health gave way; and his long and honorable career ended on the 19th of the ensuing October.

Like most of the primitive Methodist preachers, with whom the rules and example of Wesley had a predominant influence, Mr. Munger early adopted those habits of method, precision,

* Rev. Geo. Webber, to whom we are indebted for most of the remaining facts of our sketch of Mr. Munger.

and uniformity, which seldom, or perhaps never, fail to characterize the whole individuality of the man who adheres to them, and to exalt even ordinary capacity above the level of mediocrity. "He was of very studious habits, usually employing all his morning hours in reading and study, and his afternoons and evenings in visiting, preaching, and other pastoral labors. The result was, he was well read in theology in general, and with the theological writers of his own church, particularly, he was thoroughly acquainted. He wrote much, and left considerable in manuscript, upon various political and theological subjects. He uniformly preached twice, and often three times, on the Sabbath; and always, unless something very special interposed to prevent, he attended the social meetings of his charge, and was rigidly severe in the observance of the rule, 'Never disappoint a congregation;' often going miles, through storms and cold, to preach, when few or none would go to hear. From his private memorandum, it appears that, during his ministry, he preached about nine thousand sermons. His discourses were characterized more by clearness and strength than by beauty and elegance of composition; and his style of preaching was argumentative and convincing, rather than moving and persuasive. He was, however, an able preacher, and his sermons were both instructive and profitable. He was uncompromising in his love for the church of his choice, an able and fearless defender of her doctrines and polity, and a strenuous opposer of all that was erroneous in doctrine, as well as of all innovation in discipline. His one rule of action, in regard to all these things, was, 'Methodism as we received it from our fathers.' He ever seemed to live and labor under the abiding influence of the clause in his vow of ordination, 'Be diligent to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to the word of God;' and fully and faithfully did he execute his trust. He was a man of strict punctuality,— rarely, if ever, behind the time, either at a Sabbath service, lecture or Conference, — 'doing everything at the time.' He was always at his post, and ready to do the bidding of the church. His fidelity to his trust was a striking trait in his character. Any matter intrusted to him was sure

to receive prompt and faithful attention. No private or personal interest was permitted to prevent the faithful discharge of all such duties. This remark might receive ample illustration and support by a reference to his connection with several corporations, as trustee, for many years, as well as to many other things in his history during his long connection with the Conference."

Such habits are not only valuable on account of their practical advantages, but they usually have a decided moral effect on the temper of the man. Mr. Munger is said to have maintained, in the intercourse of private life, a most affectionate and considerate demeanor. His mind was remarkable for its equanimity. A member of his family has affirmed, "I have no recollection of ever seeing him in a passion." His daily life was tranquilly uniform. He had little or nothing to say of trials, of alternations of religious enjoyment and depression; but his faith and spiritual hopes were unwavering. He was a man of much prayer, and "never failed, as he informed a friend, just before his death, to pray for each of his children, individually, every day, from the time of their birth; and as the result, he had the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing, from time to time, one child after another brought to Christ, till, a few weeks before his death, at a camp-meeting, which he, in company with a daughter, attended, he had the inexpressible pleasure and privilege of rejoicing with and over her, the last remaining unconverted child, brought, at last, into the kingdom of Christ. For this he had ardently prayed during the meeting; and though too unwell to remain on the ground with any comfort, or perhaps safety, and though frequently urged by his friends to leave, still, intent upon his object, he refused to leave till God had answered his prayer, and granted him this last desire of his heart. When this was obtained, he seemed ready to say, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' He went home, and was out but little afterwards. He was taken sick while attending to his duty as a trustee of the Maine Wesleyan Seminary, about the 24th of August. From the first he had an abiding conviction that he should not recover. This he early expressed to his

afflicted companion, remarking that he believed God was about to discharge him from his labors, and that, if it could be the Divine will, he would rather then depart and be with Christ; adding, that to recover looked to him like going back again into a wilderness from which he was just emerging. He suffered much from his last sickness, but endured it all with Christian patience and fortitude, often remarking, that God had put him into the furnace of affliction that he might prepare him for his holiness. He suffered in the confidence that, 'when he was fully tried, he should come forth as pure gold.' And when the hour of his last conflict arrived, he found his faith equal to the struggle, and several times requested his friends that stood around his bed to raise up his cold and dying hands, in token of final victory; and then, without a struggle or a groan, sweetly fell asleep in Jesus."

Samuel Draper was born in Dover, N. Y., in the year 1776, and was one of the first fruits of Methodism in that town, being converted in the fifteenth year of his age. He joined the Itinerant ranks in 1801, and went immediately into Canada, to assist Joseph Jewell, Seth Crowell, Joseph Sawyer, and the other Itinerants, who were braving the exposures of that new country, for the sake of the Gospel. In 1802, he was sent to Wethersfield circuit, Vt., as colleague of Thomas Carpenter; 1803, he was colleague of Oliver Beale, on Vershire circuit, Vt.; 1804, he travelled Fletcher circuit, Vt.; 1805, Brandon, Vt., with Reuben Harris; 1806, Vergennes, Vt. After thus laboring several years with the pioneers of Methodism in Vermont, he was sent, in 1807, to Plattsburg circuit, N. Y., which he travelled two years, and was then appointed to Saratoga, N. Y.; in 1810, he was on Cambridge circuit, N. Y., which brought him again into New England. The next year, he had charge of the Champlain district, one-half of which lay within Vermont. He superintended this large field till 1815, when he was appointed to the Ashgrove district, which also extended into New England. He continued to travel it during four years, directing the labors of Samuel Luckey, Daniel Ostrander, Laban Clark, Tobias Spicer, Phineas Rice, Noah Levings, and similar men.

In 1819 he was again on Cambridge circuit, N. Y. The next year he returned to New England, and travelled Brandon circuit, Vt., two years. In 1822, he was, for the third time, appointed to Cambridge circuit, N. Y., where also he continued two years. His next and last appointment was Dutchess circuit, N. Y. He died at Amenia, N. Y., on the seventh of July, 1824, after laboring in the Itinerant ministry twenty-three years. His last illness suddenly assumed a dangerous aspect, and it was judged desirable to have medical counsel in his case. "But before any was obtained, he sunk down in the arms of death, unexpectedly to his physician, and the family where he was, and, probably, to himself. He was near two hundred miles from his family, who were ignorant of the event; and the people on the circuit successively assembled at his several appointments, anxiously looking for their new preacher, little thinking that he whom they expected to declare to them the word of life was in the eternal world. His principal concern, during his sickness, was about his circuit." *

Samuel Draper was a useful preacher, and bore faithfully his part of the heaviest labors of our cause, in the day of its struggles. Many were converted through his instrumentality. He was characterized, if not injured in his usefulness, however, by an excess of that trait of humor which distinguished not a few of the early members of our ministry. The way-faring lives of our primitive preachers brought them into communication with all classes of men, and all varieties of life; they were made thoroughly acquainted with human nature, for they had the widest range for its observation. Men, under such circumstances, are usually found inclined to humorous views of life. The peculiarly adventurous and heroic character of the Itinerancy attracted to it men of strong originality and enthusiasm. Unique characters, in whatever their peculiarity may consist, have generally, in more or less development, a common trait of the ludicrous, or of quaintness. It would seem that nature, to secure them from too rigorous an individuality, would ally them by the sympathy of humor, at least, to the general mass;

* Meth. Mag., 1824.

and no predisposition abides more tenaciously than this, even when religion imparts its holier sympathies. Perhaps no contemporary class of men presented more striking examples of orginality than the first Methodist preachers; among them were the greatest evangelists, the greatest heroes, and the greatest wits, of their day, — anomalous examples of the coëxistence of self-sacrificing piety and habitual humor. Their mode of life, mixing them with all varieties of human nature, could not fail to impart to them, as a class, a characteristic *bonhommie;* but, in not a few instances, this good-nature degenerated into inveterate pleasantry, if not jocularity, and impaired their usefulness. Samuel Draper, with his unquestionable devotion, was an example of this infirmity. His fellow-laborers admit the fact, kindly, but frankly, in their record of his death, and, "for two reasons: first, to make their account of him impartial; secondly, to warn young ministers of the dangers of such indulgence." "But," they add, "whatever imperfections may have attached to him as a *man*, as a *minister* hundreds will have cause to rejoice that they ever heard his voice;" an admission which, we suppose, most of our readers will deem a redeeming offset to an infirmity so venial, and in a veteran of such self-sacrificing devotion.

Asa Kent still survives among us — a venerable Elder in the gates of our Israel. He was blessed with a devout mother, to whose prayers and early lessons he ascribes his first religious inclinations. She was one of three praying women, who were in the habit of meeting at each other's houses, in W. Brookfield, Mass., to supplicate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in that period of religious declension and indifference which preceded the introduction of Methodism into New England.* She consecrated her son to God, from the womb. "After I had been an Itinerant some years," he says,† "she requested me to urge upon parents the duty of praying for their children, and holding

*Two of these ladies belonged to the little praying band, mentioned in Reed and Mathewson's visit to the United States, as instrumental in the revival of evangelical religion in Boston, after the Unitarian declension of the metropolitan churches; for about thirty years, prayer-meetings were privately sustained by them, in the city.

†Letter to the author.

them upon the altar (as she expressed it) until they are converted. And, to help my faith, she would mention some incidents in my past history. She was, before my birth, deeply affected by reading Hannah's prayer, when she asked for a child that she might dedicate him to God. She consulted her two advisers, and they encouraged her faith, and agreed to help by their prayers. They were with her at the birth of her child, May 9th, 1780, and rejoiced with her, and exhorted her to hold fast the promise; for they believed the Lord had given them a promise that the child should live, and be a preacher of the Gospel. When he was about eight years of age, he had a fever, depriving him of reason, and his life was despaired of. The parish minister was sent for, who endeavored to prepare the parents for the stroke, which seemed inevitable. He prayed, while the mother's heart was full, though fixed on the Lord, and with a steady hand she held fast the *promise*. An aunt, sitting by him, said, 'I think he is dying.' Quick as lightning, it was suggested to the mother, 'If he dies, what will you think of all your prayers?' This was a fiery dart, and it struck deep into her soul. She threw herself upon her knees, in retirement, and seemed dumb with agony; but the words of David occurred to her, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' She made this her only prayer, repeating it again and again. The conflict was short; a whisper, 'He shall not die,' soothed her troubled spirit; wiping her tears, she came in, saying, 'He will not die.' He soon opened his eyes; the crisis was past, and he recovered. Surely, that faith was of 'the operation of God,' which enabled her to rely with so much confidence upon him who hears prayer. The depravity of childhood, and waywardness of youth, often led her in importunate prayer, to get the promise renewed; and then, in the rejoicings of hope, she would say to herself, 'Whatsoever I now suffer by his means, I shall be more than compensated when he becomes a preacher of the Gospel.' She never dreamed that he would preach, until he had first been to college. No way opened for this, but she left all with the Lord."

The means of the fulfilment of her prayer were provided, but

very differently from her anticipations. In 1798, two Methodist preachers, being overtaken by a shower, stopped at the house of a widow lady (Mrs. Crowell) in the village. As was their wont, they conversed, during their delay, on religious subjects, and prayed, and sung some of the beautiful lyrics of Charles Wesley. One of these Itinerants was Elijah Bachelor; he promised to preach on his return, if a place were provided for a congregation. The good lady of the house, impressed and delighted with the devotions of the preachers, was disposed to comply with their proposition; but apprehending that her pastor would be offended if she opened her own door for such a service, she consulted Mrs. Kent. The latter had heard of the Methodists, and, thinking that they might be instrumental in the conversion of her children, who seemed not to be much impressed by the customary preaching of the village, she seized the opportunity as providential, and procured the use of a friend's house, some three miles distant, which had been occasionally opened to Baptist preachers. Mr. Bachelor arrived in due time, and thus introduced Methodism into that section of the country. On a second visit, young Kent was urged by his mother to attend; but he resisted her request, as he shared the common contempt against the "new sect everywhere spoken against," and felt deeply mortified that his mother should show so much interest for it. Her intercessions prevailed, however, at last, and he started for the place of meeting. "After urging his footsteps about a mile, he seemed to be inexcusably sluggish, and fearing the meeting would be begun, he set upon the run; was in a profuse sweat, and when nearly there the blood started from his nose; he stopped, and found himself almost out of breath. He washed away the blood at the brook, and went into the kitchen, which was full of young people, who were in a lively, social mood. A door opened, and a tall, well-dressed man entered, with a sharp eye, and solemn countenance. All was silent, and the solemn tones of his voice thrilled through the heart. He sung his hymn, and charmed the assembly, who were astonished at seeing him kneel down upon the floor, where he prayed as if he had intercourse with heaven. His text was Heb. 2 : 3, — 'How

shall we escape,' &c. He spake of the great salvation, of the *neglectors* of it, and their ruin, while this son of many prayers trembled and wept. Yes, then and there, he resolved to seek the salvation of his soul; and even then it was deeply impressed upon his mind that he would be a Methodist preacher. Returning home, some tried to raise a laugh; but he was mute, with a heavy heart. He had vowed to the Lord, and dared not go back; but determined to keep it to himself, as he knew of no one disposed to unite with him. But he was soon suspected to be inclined to religion, and he avowed his determination, rather than deny the charge. Kindness and entreaty were tried in vain to deter him from Methodist meetings; both old and young seemed deeply concerned for him. He concluded, if he could get one, a lad about his years, — a twin soul, — to go with him, he would give up all the rest, rather than neglect religion. He informed the lad, and urged him to seek salvation with him; but in vain. He said, We shall be laughed at; we are too young; and he, in turn, advised his friend to give up the idea for the present. Thus four or five months passed, and all seemed dark; he was attending school, where vanity abounded; and his resolutions became less firm, and it seemed doubtful if he could hold out."

His religious interest, nevertheless, deepened; he became so concerned for his spiritual welfare, that he at last abandoned the recreations of his associates. He resorted to a respectable Christian neighbor for counsel; but this good Calvinist addressed the anxious-minded youth only with reproaches of the people to whom the latter owed his best religious convictions. He expressed no doubt that "they were the false teachers spoken of by Christ — wolves in sheep's clothing. They crept into houses in the outskirts of the town, where they had more hope to deceive the people; and, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. He added, 'I am so sure that the devil has sent them, that I would as soon hear the devil preach, in bodily shape, as to hear one of them,' &c." This is but a specimen of the homily which he applied to the poor heart-stricken youth, for the edification of the young people present, who listened with breathless silence. "Young Kent at first seemed thunder-struck,

wholly taken by surprise; but, recovering, said, 'I feel the need of religion, and would not be deceived; I want the religion of the Bible, that will save the soul. Will you be so good as to tell me how I may obtain *true* religion?' Here he paused; but finally advised him to attend the parish pastor's meeting, and do as he directed. He replied that he constantly heard him preach, but the Methodists were more particular on this point. He became more calm, and finally said, that if the Methodists would call on the pastor, and he would introduce them into his pulpit, he would like very well to hear them. The youth thought he must be a strange sort of a Christian, to like very well to hear the devil preach, if he were only in the regular pulpit. But he was deeply distressed by what was said, and gave up all hope of being benefited by lifeless professors of religion. During all this time, he heard a Methodist preach once in three weeks, but had not confidence to tell him the exercises of his mind; nor could he feel much freedom to tell his mother, though she often spoke to him on the subject. There was a Quarterly Meeting in Brimfield, May 18 and 19, 1799, about eight miles distant. He went, in hope to obtain religion. The Presiding Elder, Shadrach Bostwick, was at his father's on Friday, and knew his state of mind. On Saturday, on Rom. 12: 2, he spake of the transforming power of the Holy Ghost to renew the soul, &c.; and he cried out, 'Jesus is on his way to renew the soul of the broken-hearted penitent, — is ready to do it now; give him your heart *as it is*, and salvation is yours!' The trembling penitent was in agony, his face burning in his kerchief, as he supposed he was the one addressed. Turning his mind upward, by faith he saw, as it were, Jesus coming with infinite swiftness, with love and pity in his countenance. That moment he felt an indescribable power to cast all his cares upon Christ, with perfect ease, and all was calm within. Now he hoped he should have religion before the meeting ended. The Love Feast was refreshing; he wanted to speak, but could not say he had religion. For some weeks he was comforted; but doubts and fears came on, and he knew not what to do. He had lost his conviction, and could not weep, and did not suppose a Christian ever felt so.

One day, going to his work, breathing out his soul in prayer, he said, 'O, that I knew whether I am a Christian or not!' It was suggested to his mind as distinctly as if one had spoken, 'Do just as you would if you knew you was a Christian.' He stopped in amazement, saying to himself, 'That will not do; for if I am not a Christian I should be acting the hypocrite.' But it turned in his mind, 'What is the duty of a Christian? To deny self, take up the cross and follow Jesus; and surely this I ought to do as well as I can, Christian or no Christian; and, by the grace of God, I will do it, and trust the issue with the Lord.' This decision greatly relieved his mind from suspense; the clouds dispersed, the true light shined, and peace soothed his troubled heart."

In the autumn of 1799, Brookfield was connected with Pomfret circuit, then travelled by the devoted and zealous William Thatcher.* The religious interest, begun by the labors of Elijah Bachelor, had somewhat extended, and several promising youth of the village had shared in it, among whom, Asa Kent and Joshua Crowell, the son of the widow who had first welcomed the Itinerants, were most active. Mr. Thatcher appointed them to conduct a prayer-meeting for the benefit of serious inquirers, during his absence on the circuit. In this manner did both these young men begin their ministerial career.

On the seventh of Jan., 1800, Mr. Thatcher organized the first Methodist society of Brookfield. "He formed," writes Mr. Kent, "a class of seven youths, Joshua and David Crowell, Daniel, Asa, and Polly Kent, Hosea and Elizabeth Leonard. Daniel had been brought, within a few weeks, to unite with us, by a very singular providence. The next time he came, Seth and Eunice Eddy, Darius and Phebe Eaton, and D. Leonard, joined. 'Now,' said Bro. Thatcher, 'we have twelve; which will be Peter,—which Judas?'—'Lord, is it I?' was the response. Our prayer-meetings were more fully attended, and Isaac Bonney was there to hear the young disciples pray; his heart was smitten, and he joined the class in March, with some others, and great was the consolation. The four young men who first

* See a sketch of him, in the Mem. of the Introduction of Methodism, &c.

joined have since been recognized as preachers of the Gospel; and also Isaac Bonney, who joined about two months after."

Of the manner in which Mr. Kent began to preach, he has given us the following account: "I had been greatly exercised in mind about preaching; and in the spring of 1801 received license to exhort, and after much persuasion, consented to have a meeting in Pelham on the Sabbath. I had prayed, if it were my duty to preach, I might have great freedom; and if not, I might be shut up, and that this meeting might decide the matter. The rain on Saturday prevented my going. On Sunday I found a crowd. With fear and trembling I began. I had nearly forgotten to pray, being so agitated, but read a chapter and talked of its contents. I got through two exercises, and though they urged me to come again, I went home satisfied it was not my duty, for I had not felt freedom in speaking. I was mortified for what I supposed a failure, yet thankful that the matter was now decided. For nearly a week I was very contented, but was led to review the whole; I saw I did not go with a pure intention to glorify God and benefit souls, but to *experiment*, by observing my own exercises, and inferring my duty from them. I was ashamed of that experiment; went again, in the name of the Lord of hosts, and was greatly comforted while speaking of his love. In October, I commenced travelling on Wethersfield circuit, Vt., John Nichols in charge. I staid till February, 1802, when the Presiding Elder, J. Brodhead, directed me to go to Landaff circuit, 150 miles, as its preacher was sick. I had travelled more than three months, and had not obtained even my travelling expenses. I got to Landaff just after the Quarterly Meeting, so that I must wait another quarter before I could have aid, as the collections were taken quarterly. At the Quarterly Meeting, April 17 and 18, I received my travelling expenses from the time I left for *that circuit*, and also eight dollars quarterage. I was directed to stay until I received my appointment from Conference. I begged to go home; but the Presiding Elder said, 'You travel with so much reluctance, if you go home now, I am afraid you will not start again.'—I said, 'I cannot see it to be my duty.'—'Well, I will tell you how you

may see it your duty; preach, and make another appointment in two weeks all round the circuit, and you will feel it your duty to be there.' So I submitted, as a son in the Gospel. I received word from Conference, hasted home, and arrived July 8. I had been absent near nine months, and had hardly received my travelling expenses; but dared not let my father's family know how I had fared. I was now sent to Whittingham circuit. I had taken the measles on my way home, and was very sick; when nearly recovered, D. Ostrander, the Presiding Elder, took me to Tolland circuit, to take the place of E. Bachelor, who was sick. I staid there till Nov. 8th, and received $12.83; poor encouragement, so far as money was concerned. My clothes were worn thread-bare — entirely out — after more than a year's travel, and I had been obliged to borrow money to get along, besides giving my note for my horse; but faith in God would gain the victory. I did not estimate my preaching very highly, and often felt as though the people were not half paid for coming to meeting. We had glorious revivals on Whittingham circuit; my colleague was Elijah Ward."

Mr. Kent had thus fully entered upon that laborious and self-denying career of Itinerant preaching which he has pursued with unwavering steadfastness for half a century. His subsequent appointments were, in 1803, Barnard, Vt., where, during the winter, Lewis Bates, then a stalwart youth, was sent to his help; 1804, Athens, Vt.; 1805, Lunenburg circuit, Vt., which extended into Canada, and where he travelled alone for some time, until assisted by Eleazer Wells, who began his ministerial career on this circuit; 1806, Athens, Vt., then a large four-weeks' circuit, from which two of his assistants successively retreated, discouraged at the privations and difficulties of the Itinerant life. In 1807, he was sent to Ashburnham circuit, Mass., where he was seized with fever, and disabled from his labors. The following year he was returned on the supernumerary list, and was so reduced in health that his friends supposed his public career to be ended; but in 1809 he resumed his travels, on Poplin circuit, with Edward Hyde and D. Wentworth as colleagues. He was continued on the same circuit the next year, with R. Sabin and

J. Jewell, who then began with him their ministry. In 1811, he was at Lynn, Mass; 1812 and 1813, Bristol, R. I.; 1814, on New London district, which he travelled four years; 1818 and 1819, New London; 1820 and 1821, Nantucket. His health again sunk under his labors, and in 1812 he was reported superannuated. Having removed to Middleboro', Mass., where, by his occasional labors, he was instrumental in an extensive reformation, he was continued there through 1824 and 1825, and founded the Methodist society of that town. The next two years he spent in Providence city, and 1828 in New Bedford, where he continued in poor health till 1832, when he was appointed to Newport. The following two years he labored at Charlestown, Mass. In 1836, he was at Andover; and in 1837 and 1838, at Edgartown, where he closed his effective services. He was placed upon the superannuated list in 1839, and has since resided in New Bedford, laboring in the church as his advanced age and infirmities have permitted him.

Asa Kent is small in person, uniformly serious in his demeanor, thoroughly Methodistical in his predilections, clear and precise and very experimental in his preaching. His conversation is almost invariably of the church and Divine things. An early experience of the blessing of sanctification, as taught by the fathers of Methodism, has thoroughly imbued and marked his character. His judgment is remarkably sound, and his faculties vigorous, notwithstanding his infirm age. "As to usefulness," he writes, "I say little; but I will say, I have found favor with the people where I have labored. I have professed to act with a *good intention*, and I think they have believed me sincere. This was all I have claimed of them as to my conduct. I have no trouble about being *slighted;* but verily believe I am treated with more respect than I deserve. It grieves me when people have alluded to my usefulness, as I awfully fear they overrate it. I feel I have no enemy, and surely would not indulge enmity towards any one. I am greatly indebted to grace for what I am. I believe the Lord cleansed my soul from sin more than forty years ago. I have not steadily enjoyed the witness of it; but, for nearly that time, have seen no terrors in

death or the grave. The doctrine of holiness is my comfort and joy, and I hope, through mercy, to dwell with God forever, as a sinner saved by grace; even so. Amen."

Samuel Hillman is another venerable name, which appears for the first time in the Minutes of this year. He was a native of Martha's Vineyard, Mass., but, when quite a youth, removed to Livermore, Me. It is said that he was converted to God in 1793, while alone, during a violent thunder-storm in the wilderness, two miles from any habitation. He had not seen a Methodist at this time, — but the next year he heard Jesse Lee, who, in his tireless evangelical travels, penetrated to Livermore, Me. Mr. Hillman's Christian experience was correspondent with the doctrines preached by the great Methodist pioneer, and he embraced them heartily and at once. He united with the young Class at Livermore. In 1796 he received license as a local preacher, and in 1802 was admitted on trial at the New England Conference. His appointments were, in 1802, Readfield circuit, with Joseph Snelling; 1803, Hallowell, with Aaron Humphrey; 1804, Bristol; 1805 and 1806, Union, with Pliny Brett; 1807, Falmouth; 1808, Scarboro'; 1809, Poland; 1810, Livermore, with John Hardy; 1811 and 1812, Hallowell; 1813, Pittstown; 1814, Readfield; 1815, Livermore. All his appointments were within the State of Maine. In 1816, he located at Monmouth, where he continued to labor faithfully, as his opportunities admitted.

We have been unable to learn any further incidents of his early life. He left no record of it, and expressed a wish that nothing should be said of him "more than that he was an unprofitable servant." "Since 1840, he has been able to do but little, in consequence of a fall, which fractured his hip. He has preached occasionally, particularly on funeral occasions, for which he possessed a very good gift. Since he has lived in Monmouth, he has preached about two hundred funeral sermons. Since his confinement in consequence of his lameness, he has read the Bible through more than seventy times, besides a vast amount of other reading. Perhaps there is no man among us who has kept himself better informed on the more interesting subjects

connected with church and state. Much might be said of him. He was a man of integrity and uniform piety. Death found his victim prepared; — his end was peace." *

William Anson, who entered the Eastern States the present year, did heroic service in the church in Canada, New York and New England; but scarcely any information respecting him has been recorded, and we are entirely ignorant of his parentage, early life, conversion, and even the place and date of his birth. He joined the travelling connection in 1800, and went to labor and suffer with Jewell, Sawyer and their few associates, in the wilds of Canada, where he continued two years. In 1802 he returned to the States, and was sent to plant Methodism on Grand Isle (Vt.), in Lake Champlain. Here his word was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. An extraordinary religious interest prevailed throughout the island; and he reported, at the end of the year, more than a hundred members of the church.† In 1803 he labored on Vergennes circuit, Vt.; the next year he returned to Canada. In 1805, he travelled Pittsfield circuit, Mass.,‡ and in 1806, South Britain. The next year he took charge of the Ashgrove district, and superintended during four years the labors of Samuel Draper, Lewis Pease, Marvin Richardson, Phineas Rice, Tobias Spicer, Aaron Scholefield, John Finnegan, and other strong men. A large portion of his district lay within Now England. At the expiration of his term of service he was transferred to the Rhinebeck district, which, at that time, might be called a New England district, as all its circuits, save one, bore New England names. It extended from Rhinebeck, on the Hudson, to New Haven, on Long Island Sound. During his superintendency of this large field of labor, he commanded a powerful corps of New England preachers, among whom were Hibbard, Culver, Draper, Coleman, Scholefield, Hunt, &c. His subsequent appointments were, in 1812 and 1813, Dutchess; 1814 and 1815, Rhinebeck; 1816 and 1817, Saratoga; 1818 and 1819, Pittstown; 1820 and 1821, Chatham, — all in N. Y.; and 1822, Pittsfield, Mass.

* Rev. Rufus Day to the author. † Bangs' Hist. of M. E. Church. Anno 1802.
‡ Not in 1806, as stated in the Obituary of the Minutes of 1849.

In 1823, he was compelled by his enfeebled health to retire from effective service, and was returned supernumerary. He sought repose on his farm, at Malta, Saratoga County, N.Y. In the spring of 1847, he was attacked by paralysis, and rapidly declined in body and mind, until he entered into the heavenly rest, on the 17th of July, 1848. He joined the Itinerant ministry when it was beset with privations and imposed labors which tried the souls of the bravest men. "He had his full share of hardships," say his co-laborers; "but never flinched." He was the pioneer of Methodism in many places, and carried the proclamation of free salvation into the wildernesses of Vermont, northern New York and Canada, and often from house to house. His piety is pronounced "undoubted," his integrity "sterling," and his talents "respectable." "He was laborious and useful, and his preaching plain and powerful." The name of such a man should not be allowed to perish.

CHAPTER XVI.

PROGRESS AND INCIDENTS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR 1802–1803.

Camp-meetings. — Remarkable Scenes on the Connecticut. — Letter from Ostrander. — Phenomena. — Livermore, Me. — Kibby at Marblehead. — Ebenezer Washburn. — Trials at Springfield. — Asa Kent on Landaff Circuit. — Persecutions. — Successes.

THE year was prosperous, though not so generally as the preceding one. Some remarkable reformations occurred in various parts of New England. Middletown circuit, Ct., was especially the scene of great interest. About two years previous to the present period, camp-meetings were introduced in the Western States. Though liable to many objections, they were found to be capable of judicious management, and of exceeding usefulness. Extraordinary revivals had resulted from them, and it was alleged that their novelty attracted a class of hearers who would not come within the reach of the ordinary means of religious influence, while their protracted exercises, usually extending through a week, left permanent impressions on minds which were too unsusceptible to be impressed by the usual appeals of religion.

The preachers on Middletown circuit, after prayer and consultation, resolved to attempt the experiment of such a meeting in the town of Haddam. Daniel Ostrander, who travelled at that time the adjacent New London district, wrote to Asbury respecting its results, as follows: "There has been an extraordinary work in the city of Middletown. It began at a kind of field-meeting they had on that circuit, in September last. As it was down Connecticut river, about fifty went from Middletown by water. Some of them were awakened at the meeting, and eight or nine were converted on their return, before they got home. The city was soon alarmed, and from that time the

work began to spread. About forty, it is supposed, were brought to the saving knowledge of the Lord in about six weeks. The spirit of persecution is much awake. The houses where they assemble are frequently stoned, and the windows broken to pieces; but all this does not move the young converts, who are as bold as lions."

There still lives a venerable man who was at this camp or "field meeting," and who, like most of the old Methodists that survive from those days of the trials and triumphs of their cause, fondly cherishes, in an extreme old age, his early religious reminiscences.* Dating from "Pilgrim's Tent, on the Banks of Jordan," he writes, "I was invited to attend, and aid the preachers in their labors at this meeting. When I arrived at the place appointed, I found a stand erected in the centre of a level piece of ground, with seats for about one hundred persons. There were no tents, no trees, and no covering from the sun, wind or rain, and no preachers but those of Middletown circuit. I was told that invitations had been given to the preachers on other circuits, but without effect. A vessel had arrived from Middletown, with a full freight of saints and sinners. There was, the first day, fine weather; a large congregation assembled, and the exercises commenced at ten o'clock, A. M. The stand was surrounded by a motley multitude of human beings, of all colors and characters, — red, black, white, — rich poor, lame, blind, — doctors, lawyers, and ministers, — Congregationalists, Baptists, Churchmen, Methodists, and some Deists. The multitude were attentive to two sermons delivered from the stand, and many stirring exhortations by private members of our societies. God was with us, and some convictions were evident during the day. As we had no tents, we retired to houses, barns, and on shipboard, and held prayer-meetings during the night. On the next day we assembled at the stand, and again preached, to an increased congregation. God gave effect to his word, and many were pricked in the heart, and began to say,

* Mr. J. Stocking, of Glastenbury, Ct., an aged local preacher. Mr. Stocking's memory errs, in the document from which we quote, respecting the precise date of this first Methodist camp-meeting in New England.

'Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?' At about three o'clock, P. M., it commenced raining, which drove us from the field, to houses and barns — but not from our work. The greater part of the congregation took shelter in the house nearest the stand, which was filled to overflowing. To remedy the confusion occasioned by the crowd, the mourners were placed in a room by themselves, only attended by such as labored for their salvation. I visited the rooms, and found work enough to do. I found a doctor of medicine railing against the work, by representing the case of a female who lay helpless on a bed. I requested him to examine her condition. He did so, and determined her to be in health, acknowledging he could not account for the state of her body on natural principles. The doctor was afterward silent and thoughtful. I visited another room, and found a doctor of divinity disputing with the people. I gave him a short rebuke, and he was quiet for a while. I called the people to order, and addressed them from 'Let all things be done decently and in order.' The people were now quite orderly and prepared to hear. The preacher in charge followed in a most powerful exhortation. During this exhortation occurred such a manifestation of the power of God as I had never seen in the same form. It was as if a large cannon charged with grape-shot were discharged through the congregation in a direction from north to south, when instantly about one-third fell to the floor on a line through the centre, and those on either side trembled and held by the walls. The above-mentioned doctor of divinity fled out of the house into the rain, and after recovering himself, came back into the house. The following was a sleepless night; many found the pearl of great price, and thanked God while they lived for this field-meeting. The next day the meeting broke up, and all returned to their respective homes. The vessel from Middletown, on her return, had to pass four villages; and had a ship of war passed up the Connecticut, it would not have produced a greater sensation among the villagers. It was, indeed, a novel scene. The vessel was freighted with living souls, and many of them had been made alive at the field-meeting. But some were still groaning for deliverance, so that, as the vessel passed

the villages, the songs of praise to God, and the ardent prayers for mourners, echoed from the adjacent hills. No wonder the villagers were awake, for they had not seen it on this wise before. Indeed, the whole population seemed in waiting, — some on the banks of the river, some at their doors and windows, until the voices died away on the distant hills. On her arrival at Middletown, the whole city was moved, some with pity for the deluded people, others with indignation at the disturbers of the good citizens of Middletown, others with fear of 'whereunto this would grow.' The fruits of this meeting were the conversion of about thirty souls, and an increased confidence in the use of extraordinary means for the conversion of sinners. The Methodists suffered much persecution at Middletown, from the vicious part of the community. I have been stoned, and my life put in jeopardy, by the lawless mob. Open persecution continued there until put down by the strong arm of the law. Thanks to God, Middletown is renovated!"

The phenomena of the loss of self-control, mentioned in this extract, were not uncommon in those days. New England had been familiar with them also in the "Great Awakening," under Edwards. The pneumatologist, or psychologist, or perhaps the physiologist, may hereafter throw some light upon them; all that we can say of them at present is, that they seem to be the effect of overpowering moral emotions on the nervous system, that they have been remarkably uniform in whatever diversities of time or place, that they are followed by little or no physical injury, and indicate nothing more respecting the emotions which cause them than their intensity on the one hand, or a characteristic susceptibility on the other. They should certainly not be considered an impeachment of religious feelings; for it ought not to be surprising that the powerful influences of Divine truth should overwhelm the self-possession of some minds, and they not unfrequently strong minds in robust bodies. It may yet be discovered, that among the occult laws of our nature the Creator has secured an extraordinary susceptibility of moral impressions — a susceptibility of which these phenomena are the yet mysterious manifestations. At least, these extraordinary effects

seem to attend almost every very extraordinary period of religious interest.*

Joseph Snelling and his colleague, Samuel Hillman, had considerable success, the present year, on Readfield circuit, in Maine, and formed societies which still survive. Mr. Snelling gives the following account of the origin of the church at Livermore: "We preached on the Sabbath at Monmouth, Readfield, Farmington, and Livermore. The last-mentioned place we found in a very dull state; so much so that some of the preachers thought of giving up preaching there, or leaving it out of the circuit. But great is the wisdom and goodness of God; the first time we preached there the spirit of the Lord was poured out upon the people, and a work of reformation commenced. At this time there were but two or three Methodists in the place; but soon a church was organized, and some of the most respectable people in the place joined it, among whom were Deacon Livermore, his wife and daughter. This gentleman was formerly deacon of the Congregational church in Waltham, Mass. He moved from thence to the State of Maine, and purchased a township of land, which was called by his name. He was much respected and beloved by the people of the town, and his house was the stranger's home. The prospect was good generally, but the greatest encouragement was at Livermore. This circuit was a four-weeks' circuit, and we had prayer-meetings and Class-meetings to attend to nearly every day in the week."

Joshua Taylor, who was appointed the present year to Boston district, spent some time on the Maine district, after the Conference at Monmouth. About three months before the close of the ecclesiastical year, he wrote to Asbury as follows: "We have at present some little revivals in several places. Boston,

* "When Loyola commenced his sermon, a breathless silence reigned through the church; as he went on, there was perceptible a pressure toward the pulpit; sighs soon became audible on every side; then these sighs swelled into sobs, and sobs into groans. Some fell on the pavement, as if lifeless. Once and again an obdurate offender — hitherto obdurate — pushed forward, threw himself at the feet of the preacher as he left the pulpit, and, with convulsive struggles, made a loud confession of his crimes. Men from every class of society, and not exclusive of dignified ecclesiastics, were numbered among these conquests of *preaching in earnest.*"—*Isaac Taylor's "Loyola and Jesuitism."*

Lynn and Marblehead, have been favorably visited. At Boston, I think, there have been eighty added to the society — about forty at Lynn, and about thirty at Marblehead. This seems to us great doings in this part of the country; but to you, who are accustomed to greater things, it must seem as nothing. Convictions among us, in some instances, have been lively and affecting: but, in general, we are pretty still. May the time come quickly in which we shall see and feel more power! I went once round the district of Maine, as you directed me, and I saw several conversions at Quarterly Meetings. Since I came from thence, I have been informed that the work is prospering. In Bristol, Union circuit, Brother Baker informs me, that one hundred and forty had been converted in less than three months. The work in Bristol has perhaps been more powerful than any heretofore experienced in the east. They have frequent instances of persons, who, after groaning for some time, under the power of conviction, rise in the congregation and give glory to God for pardoning love. Brother Baker writes, 'Last Tuesday evening I had an appointment to preach in the school-house, but was agreeably disappointed. When I entered the house, it seemed like the gate of heaven. I never felt such power, such an awful, solemn sense of God, before, — a crowded assembly, all deeply engaged, — I began to pray, and felt my soul drawn almost to the third heaven. As soon as I had ended, one, who for some days had been on her knees almost half the time, arose, and shouted, *Glory to God!* Many cried aloud for pardon: and it was not long before another praised the Lord for pardoning love. Our meeting continued till late, and I suppose nine or ten were converted that happy night.' From Bristol, the fire appears to have spread into different parts of the circuit, so that backsliders are reclaimed, luke-warm professors quickened, and hardened sinners, in some instances, have fallen under the word, as if they had been shot. Could I once see such a work as this become general in New England, like Simeon of old, I could depart in peace."

Epaphras Kibby labored successfully, but amidst severe trials, at Marblehead. Methodism was yet feeble and contemned in

that town, and religion generally depressed. Mr. Kibby established evening meetings, — especially evening prayer-meetings, a measure which was quite anomalous in the community. It occasioned general and contemptuous conversation; but many were attracted to these meetings by their novelty, if not by better motives, and gracious results attended them. Numerous conversions followed. One of these was in the family of a citizen who took great offence at the faithful preacher, and threatened him with personal violence. The enraged man paced the side-walk of Mr. Kibby's lodgings, staff in hand, to inflict the menace. Mr. K. consulted with a friendly lawyer, who admonished him to leave the town, as his life was in danger. The reply of the preacher was befitting him: "Worthier men have died for the Gospel: I can die for it; I shall not desert my post." On returning, he met his persecutor in the street; the preacher advanced calmly on his way, turning neither to the right nor the left; his enemy cowered before his quiet courage, and passed on in silence, and no one thereafter dared to threaten the servant of the Lord. He pursued his work with increasing success; the various religious denominations of the town became respectful, if not openly favorable, towards the small Methodist society; a salutary religious awakening prevailed, and Mr. K. had "the privilege of rejoicing over thirty or forty persons who were converted to God during the year." *

Ebenezer Washburn labored this year on Granville circuit, Mass., with unusual success, and added to the societies more than one hundred members, notwithstanding continued hostility from the "standing order." The Methodists of those days were in many places persecuted even to fines, the seizure of their goods, and, sometimes, imprisonment by the dominant church. Mr. Washburn has recorded an example of the reckless manner in which they were occasionally treated by grave judges on the bench. "From the Conference of 1802, I was sent again to Granville circuit, to travel and labor alone, the northern part of the circuit having been taken off to form Buckland circuit. I moved my family into West Springfield, where there was a small, but

* MS. History of the M. E. Church in Marblehead, by Rev. E. Otheman.

very loving and friendly society. In this parish, called Feeding Hills, the Congregationalists moved and repaired their meeting-house; for which purpose they levied a tax of nearly three hundred dollars upon the Methodists. When I say Methodists, I mean to be understood both church members and certificate members. In this place we had the most of the latter. The tolerance of the law of Massachusetts, at that time, was such as to allow the Congregationalists to assess a tax against every ratable person in the parish, and to collect the money into the treasury of their society. Provision was made for the preachers of dissenting denominations (for they called all other denominations dissenters, as much as the Established Church of England does) to go to the treasurer with a list of the names belonging to his society, and draw the money levied against those names out of the treasury. And if the treasurer refused to pay it over, it might be sued for, by, or in the name of, the preacher. These members had made application to the Presiding Elder, Brother Bostwick, for a preacher to be sent there to recover the money which had been collected by distraint upon their property; and I was sent there for that purpose. I first took legal counsel, and then went and made a demand of the money. The treasurer used me very politely, but said he acted as the servant of the society, and that his orders were not to pay it. I then took three witnesses with me, and made a second demand of the money, and left a written copy of the demand with the treasurer. Being still denied, I commenced legal process against the fourth parish of West Springfield, and employed as counsel a lawyer by the name of Taylor, of Northampton. I proved in court that we were a regularly organized society, and that all the money we demanded had been collected by taking property and selling it at the post; that the men from whom the money was taken had lodged their certificates in the office of the society's clerk, before the tax was voted to be raised. I also proved, by the testimony of Brother Bostwick, that I was a regular ordained preacher in the Methodist Episcopal church, and that I was appointed to the charge of that circuit, by the proper authorities of the church. But, after all, the court of justice, so called, gave judgment

against me. We appealed to the Superior Court, and employed the Hon. James Sullivan as counsel, who was at that time attorney general of the State of Massachusetts, and subsequently became governor of that state. When I engaged him to undertake the cause, I presented it to him in all its bearings; gave him the minutes of my former proceedings, and told him what I expected to prove. He said my cause was just, and that the constitution, both of the United States and of the State of Massachusetts, says, you shall gain your cause. The statutes of the state say, you shall have it. Reason, justice, and equity say, you shall have it. But, with our present judges on the bench, it is hardly probable that you will obtain it. He said there never had been a judgment obtained in that state in favor of any dissenting denomination against the standing order. He said he was glad I had taken the matter up, because it would have a tendency to open the eyes of the people. Our opponents kept the trial off as long as the law would allow them to do so. When the cause came to trial, our evidence was clear on every point we wished to prove. The law appeared to be decidedly in our favor. Our attorney was an able, learned, and eloquent pleader, and on that occasion put forth one of his most noble and splendid efforts. He was a true friend to religious toleration, but he stood on the soil of the rankest intolerance. When the pleadings were all closed, and the cause was given to the judge, for him to give to the jury, — when at least four-fifths of the numerous spectators thought the case so clear that the jury would not leave their seats to find a verdict in our favor, and many gave it as their opinion that the judge knew that if the cause was submitted to the jury, their oath would bind them to bring in a verdict in favor of the Methodists,— instead of giving it to the jury, the judge cried, 'No cause of action,' and flung it out of court. Our counsel inquired why there was no cause of action. The judge said, 'Because the indictment said the money was taken for the support of the preached Gospel; whereas, it appeared in evidence that it was taken to build a meeting-house.' Mr. Sullivan said he had always supposed that if meeting-houses were built to worship the Christian's God in, they were built for

the support of the Gospel; but he supposed he must submit to higher and more learned authority. Thus we lost our cause, because the good people of Massachusetts did not, at that time, build meeting-houses for the support of the preached Gospel! The parish agents were appointed to defend the cause to the time of obtaining judgment. Of course, they were not clothed with authority to take out an execution for the cost, till they went home and called a parish meeting. When this was done, the Methodists and Baptists all turned out to the meeting, and outnumbered the Congregationalists, and voted the execution answered to the satisfaction of the parish, which left each party to pay its own cost. They then voted that the meeting-house should be occupied, for that year, one-third of the time by the Congregationalists, one-third by the Methodists, and one-third by the Baptists. During that year, the Baptists built themselves a house of worship in Suffield, and the next year they voted the house at Feeding Hills one-half the time to the Congregationalists, and the other half of the time to the Methodists. I had the privilege of holding four Quartely Meetings in it, when I was on the Rhinebeck district."

The Itinerants in New Hampshire had, also, their share of the trials of the times. Asa Kent travelled Landaff circuit, in the early part of 1802. It extended from Rumney, in New Hampshire, to Upper Coos, and included most of the towns in that region. Lancaster was a considerable village, pleasantly situated on the east side of Connecticut river, and was the stronghold of opposition. "The persecutors," says Mr. Kent, "were determined to keep Methodists out of the place; but a few had been converted, and others had ears to hear. I preached there to a crowded house, with much enlargement and freedom of spirit. Some were a little unruly, but they became quiet upon a mild admonition. Three days after, I was passing through the Nine Miles Woods, to Littleton, and was overtaken by three sleighs filled with men and women. One cried, 'That 's the Methodist preacher: let 's run him down;' and they set their horses upon full speed. The snow was very deep, and with great difficulty I succeeded in getting my horse out of their

way, as they passed with loud shouting. They stopped at the tavern in Littleton, and probably tasted of the 'gude crather.' As I passed, one sung out, 'There goes the Methodist preacher: come on,—we 'll run him down!' With loud cracking of whips and shouting, they came like furies. I gave them the road, but the forward driver turned out after me. The noise and tumult so disturbed my horse, that he became almost unmanageable. I finally wheeled him around, and beckoned to them, and they became quiet. The following conversation took place. I asked, 'Can you tell me if I have fallen among gentlemen or civil citizens?' — The driver vociferated, 'I guess nary one.' — 'I think you are correct,' said I; 'for gentlemen will not be guilty of a mean action, and civil citizens will treat all people with civility, especially on the public highway. These are not your characters. But there is another class of ill-bred people, who have no concern about the rules of civility. They have no fear of losing a good character, as they have none to lose; but as there will be a day of future retribution, they must give an account for all their conduct here,' &c. I went on to exhort them to repentance, for I felt happy in the Lord. All stopped, and were quiet. The boisterous driver had put on his cap, which had fallen off in his flourishes. The women hung their heads, hid their faces, and appeared to be ashamed to be found in such company. At length the driver interrupted me — 'Well, we do not know but you are a true minister; and if you will ride out as far as that stump yonder, we will all believe that you are so.' — 'Your opinion is of little consequence to me,' I replied; 'but the Lord knoweth the heart, and sooner or later your sin will find you out.' — 'Well, are you coming to Lancaster to preach again?' he inquired. — I answered 'Yes.' — He swore tremendously, if I came, I should be 'sacrificed.' 'For,' said he, 'we have a minister of our own, and we will not have Methodist preaching there: we have carried one preacher out of town, and you shall share no better.' — 'It seems, then, that you, sir, was one that was employed in that noble deed.' — 'Don't accuse me of *that*, if you know what is good for yourself!' — 'Why, sir, you said *we*, and I supposed you intended to identify yourself with the actors in

that affair.' He swore roundly, that if I came there again, they would take my head from my shoulders. — I replied, 'In former times some died for the testimony of Jesus Christ, and it will only be repeating what has been done before. The Lord being my helper, I will be there in about three weeks; so you may get all things in readiness,' As he was pouring out threats, one said 'Glory,' and another, 'Amen,' and off they went at full speed. The landlord, who had seen and heard all, thought I ought to prosecute them; but, poor man, it may be, he never thought how much he had helped the matter along, by selling them rum. I was at the place at the time appointed, and, as I expected, did not get a sight of them. But the Lord comforted the hearts of a few who were praying, and longing for the displays of Divine mercy."

Such is an example of the vulgar abuse which these devoted men had to bear in those days. They were denounced from the pulpits, maltreated in the courts, interrupted in the course of their sermons with charges of heresy, and assailed in the streets by the rabble. Washburn was hooted through the villages; Hedding, cursed with outcries on the highway; Dow's nose was publicly wrung; Sabin was knocked down, and struck on the head, to the peril of his life, with the butt of a gun; Wood was horse-whipped; Christie, summoned out of bed to answer to a charge of violating the laws, by marrying a couple of his people; Willard, wounded in the eye by a blow, the effects of which he still shows; Mudge, denied the rights of a clergyman, and arraigned before the magistrate for assuming them; Kibby, stoned while preaching, and Taylor drummed out of town. It requires more determination to endure such grievances than to meet graver trials; but the early Methodist Itinerants were proof against either.

Amidst their many sufferings, they could nevertheless exclaim, with St. Paul, — "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." Great reformations spread along their evangelical tours, and they concluded the year with 9758 members in their societies. They had gained, since their

last Conference, 1153. Maine reported, at the next session, eleven circuits, — an addition of one, besides the enlargement of others. There were now about 1750 Methodists in that Province: 335 had been gathered in during the year. Much interest had prevailed on several circuits in Massachusetts, and Methodism had fought, for the first time, some successful battles in the metropolis. The little Boston society of sixty had strengthened into a band of one hundred and eighty-six. Great revivals had spread over the western appointments of the state, especially on Granville circuit. Most of the circuits in Connecticut had been prospered, and it had been a successful year in both Vermont and New Hampshire.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONFERENCES OF 1803.

Asbury and Whatcoat return to the East. — Visit the Churches. — At Waltham. — First Boston Session of the New England Conference. — Members. — Proceedings. — Examination of Character. — Reports from the Circuits. — Finances. — The Bishops on their Route to New York Conference. — Its Session. — Returns from the Circuits. — The Sabbath Services. — Prosperity.

Asbury and Whatcoat arrived in New York city about the middle of May, 1803, on their way to the New England Conference. They had traversed the nation westward to Tennessee, and southward to the further Carolina, since we last parted from them, and were weary and ill. After spending three days in the city, they sought refuge at the home of "the Sherwoods," in New Rochelle — Asbury's favorite resting-place, on the border of New England. They tarried there, however, but briefly; and Asbury preached daily, as usual. In two or three days they reached Redding, Conn. It was here that the second Methodist society of New England had been formed, about twelve years before. Asbury found it in a flourishing condition, and exhorted it to "Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindliness, humbleness of mind," &c. Col. 3: 12, 13.

On May 27th, he writes, "Finding the road, by information, to be rocky and hilly, we were persuaded to come back by the post road; we therefore directed our course down through Greenfield and Bridgeport to Stratford, and arriving at Elkanan Wheeler's, we were willing to rest. Thirty miles of our journey we made without feeding man or beast. My health is better; but the labor of riding, and the inconvenience occasioned by the dust raised by the chaise in advance of us, made me feel a little like Jonah. My soul is often led out after God. My treasure and

pleasure is Christ, and the service of his church. The Baptists of Connecticut have sent their petition from the assembly to the legislature of Connecticut, to the bishops of the Methodist church, that they may have their aid in obtaining toleration. What can we do, and how is it our business? We are neither Popes nor politicians. Let our brethren assert their own liberties. Besides, who may now be trusted with power? The Baptists are avowed enemies to Episcopacy, be the form of church government as mild as it may. Now it seems, Popes, as they would otherwise term us, may be useful to them, nor are they too proud to ask for help; but our people will not be pushed into their measures. Their bishops have no coercive power of this sort. If the Baptists know not what to do, we cannot tell them.

"Sunday, 29th, we came to Middletown. As it was the hour of devotion, we stepped into the Separatists' meeting-house, and heard a certain Mr. Greaves preach. At five o'clock, Brother Whatcoat, after some demurring, was permitted to preach. When he was done, the old women controverted his doctrine of sanctification. The work of God revives at New Haven; and Satan's emissaries rage, and those who are *too good to be better* oppose."

The next day they pressed on some twenty-five miles. Asbury preached, however, in the evening, and ordained a deacon. On the 1st of June they travelled twenty miles to Windham, where Whatcoat preached, and the following day they arrived at Thompson. The young society of that town collected at four o'clock in the afternoon, and Asbury addressed them on "the fruits of the spirit, — love, joy, peace, long-suffering," &c. Gal. 5: 22—26.

Thursday, 3d, they were at Milford, Mass. "Brother Whatcoat preached at five o'clock; and, on Friday, I made, at Needham, an improvement on 1 Pet. 5: 10. On each of the last two days we have travelled thirty miles. I have read some letters giving an account of the work of God at the south. Some in our eastern congregations wonder, if they do not believe. Since we left Baltimore we have made seven hundred and twelve miles."

On Saturday, 5th, they reached Asbury's old asylum in New England, the rural home of Bemis and Pickering, at Waltham. Here, in the most beautiful season of the year, and amidst simple but pleasant scenery, they reposed four days. "My mind," wrote Asbury, "is in peace; but such perpetual motion wearies the flesh and flags the spirits. Poor New England! she is the valley of dry bones still! Come, oh breath of the Lord, and breathe upon these slain that they may live!"

On Sunday, Whatcoat preached on the great blessings of the new covenant. Heb. 8: 10—12. Asbury followed with a discourse on the "heed" which should be given to these blessings, from Heb. 2: 1—3, as an appropriate counterpart to the sermon of Whatcoat. They tarried in their pleasant retreat till Tuesday, "resting, reading, writing, and laying plans for the Boston Conference."

On Wednesday, the 8th of June, 1803, they reached the metropolis, and opened the session of the New England Conference, — the first convened in Boston.* Eighteen members were present the first day. The session was held "in our solitary little chapel," writes Asbury, — the humble, barn-like structure, which had been erected by the feeble Methodist society, on Hanover avenue, then called Methodist alley. It was a novel occasion to Boston. The Conference sat six hours a-day. The congregation met for preaching at five o'clock in the morning; the session began at eight o'clock, and closed for preaching at eleven o'clock; it was resumed at three o'clock, P. M., and followed with preaching again, in the evening.

The members present during the session were George Pickering, Joshua Taylor, Thomas Lyell, Ralph Williston, John Bloodgood, Epaphras Kibby, Daniel Webb, Reuben Hubbard, Comfort Smith, Aaron Humphrey, Timothy Merritt, Joseph Snelling, Asa Heath, Joshua Soule, Nathan Emery, Joseph Baker, Edward Whittle, Oliver Hall. The first thirteen were elders, the next three deacons, and the last two probationers.

*The printed Minutes of 1802 appoint the session on the second Thursday in June. It commenced on the second Wednesday, according to the MS. record.

The first day's session was introduced with Scripture lessons, singing, and prayer, by George Pickering. Its business was confined to the examination of the recommendations of candidates from the Quarterly Conferences. There were at least six of these, — four of them from Maine. Joshua Soule closed the day with a sermon.

On Thursday, Asbury opened the session with the usual devotional exercises. Taylor, Pickering and Bloodgood, were appointed a committee on the pecuniary deficiencies of the preachers; and it is a significant fact that this was the only business committee of the Conference. Those great interests of education, missions, publications, temperance, &c., which now engross so large an amount of the deliberations of our Conferences, had not yet assumed an appreciable form.

The chief business of the day was "the examination of characters." The presbyters and deacons, respectively, passed in review, and there was no lack of frankness and directness in the remarks made upon their defects or merits. Hesitancy was expressed respecting one because of "his oddity and uncouthness of expression in preaching;" but a brother "thought he had reformed, and he was continued." Another was discontinued for having deserted his post, "shortly after taking it, the past year." Respecting another, "Brothers Merritt and Humphrey spoke of some improprieties of language, but commended his piety." Of another it is recorded, that "he had been instrumental of great good where he had travelled." One is discontinued, "not being acceptable among the people." "All," however, it is recorded, "hoped he was pious." He felt deeply the rebuke, and the next day begged for a reconsideration. Methodist Conferences, though rigorously strict in such inquiries, are proverbially credulous of the protestations and good resolutions of their members. This rebuked brother promised improvement. "Brother Humphrey and others expressed a hope that what had been done might be of service to him in future; and as he had an earnest desire to have another year's trial, alleging that he would then feel more easy to retire if he was not useful, the vote was taken, and another year's trial was granted him."

In the examination of deacons, it is recorded of one that "he had seen a glorious revival of religion in his district." Joshua Soule, "having travelled two years since his election to the office of deacon, was examined; and as he maintained a good character and promising talents, he was unanimously elected to the eldership." Nathan Emery was "found blameless and useful."

On Friday, the Elders were examined. Complaint was made against John Bloodgood, "for not having visited enough; but this was obviated by the consideration of his abundant labors, he having had a good revival of religion in his congregation." Joshua Taylor made the apologetic complaint, and when his own case was under examination, Bloodgood retorted by complaining that "he had not enemies enough," and Pickering thought "he was not sufficiently austere in order to govern some that he had to deal with, which objection Brother Taylor said was well-founded." Daniel Webb was thought by Pickering to "love home too well." Against another, Taylor alleged that "some thought him rather grand and lofty in his diction." Kibby, who had been at Marblehead, was reminded that "he had not changed with the Lynn preacher as much as might have been well; but as he and the preacher at Lynn had both had good revivals of religion, it was thought their attention was well taken up in their stations." Thomas Lyell was gently reproved for "not being altogether regular in the administration of discipline;" and it was alleged against Ralph Williston, that "he had not taken the appointment which was given him; but the want of health at the time when he should have taken it, and his usefulness in Boston (as he and Thomas Lyell had seen a great work in that town), seemed to be a sufficient apology."

Such were the caution and brotherly frankness with which these primitive "*Conferences*" (justly so called) were conducted. Few in numbers, strangers in a strange land, as most of the preachers were, and watched on every side for evil, it was requisite that they should guard each other in the fear of God, though in mutual charity. They did so with unwavering fidelity and "brotherly love continued."

Ostrander, of New York Conference, was present during

the day; he opened the Conference in the morning, and preached in the evening. An interval was spent in prayer, in which "the candidates were commended to God." Asa Heath was located, "urging bodily inability, and family concerns;" and Timothy Merritt "arose and stated that he had thoughts of locating for more than a year, — that he had made it a subject of prayer, and alleged that he had gained full satisfaction in his mind that it was his duty to locate. Much was said against his locating, as the brethren were unwilling to lose him out of the travelling connection; but, upon the vote being taken, a location was granted him."

Reports were received from the circuits. John Bloodgood had labored with success at Lynn. He was there in 1791, as colleague of Daniel Smith; after an absence of twelve years, in the middle Conferences, he had returned to assist his old co-laborers in the east, and had entered upon his work with his characteristic energy.* Lynn returned but eighty-two members in 1802; it now reported one hundred and twenty-one. The society in Boston had flourished. Thomas Lyell was exceedingly popular there; assisted by Ralph Williston, he had witnessed a gracious revival, and returned one hundred and eighty-six members — nearly three times the number of the preceding year. Asa Heath reported a gain of forty on Falmouth circuit, Me. Nathan Emery had enjoyed extensive prosperity on Norridgewock circuit; his returns were forty-five in advance of those of the last year. A new circuit, named Bristol, had been formed in Maine, from which two hundred members were reported. There had been a considerable reformation, and a gain of sixty-two, on the Penobscot circuit. Other appointments also reported gratifying success; and but few had declined, notwithstanding the powerful draw-backs which combined to retard their prosperity. Much gratitude was felt in the Conference, on the announcement that the aggregate increase within its own limits was five hundred and nineteen. At the end of these proceedings, Asbury ascended the pulpit, and concluded the morning by a sermon.

*See an account of him in "Memorials of the Introduction of Methodism." Anno 1790.

On Saturday, the committee of finances closed its business. According to its report, the highest sum received by any preacher was $135.22, which had been paid Daniel Webb, on Salisbury and Hawke circuit, N. H. The smallest amount received was $26, the payment of Reuben Hubbard, on the only circuit in Rhode Island. Joshua Taylor had received, on his whole district, $61. Epaphras Kibby's receipts at Marblehead had been $64. Timothy Merritt, who now had a family, received $75. Philip Munger, $57. The aggregate receipts of the twenty-six preachers * who pertained to the Conference were $1200, an average of but little more than $47. The aggregate deficit was a larger sum than the receipts, being $1287. The average deficit was nearly $50. The sum of $306.41 was all that could be provided to meet this deficiency; $29 of it were taken up in a collection, during the session; $30 more were given by fifteen preachers; $24 had been sent by Needham circuit; $90 came from the chartered fund at Philadelphia, and $100 had been forwarded from the Baltimore Conference, as a token of its continued sympathy with the self-sacrificing men whom it had sent to New England. These contributions were distributed among the claimants, according to their necessities. Asa Heath received $32, Timothy Merritt $9, Joshua Soule $2, &c.

It may well be doubted whether the records of any other modern church afford a parallel example of pecuniary sacrifice. The whole reported receipts of these twenty-six men did not surpass what is considered the moderate salary of a city clergyman.

At eleven o'clock Bishop Whatcoat preached; the discourse was followed by the ordination of Joshua Soule and Nathan Emery, Elders, and Edward Whittle, Deacon. Asbury read out the appointments, and the same day the devoted and self-sacrificing band dispersed to their various circuits, to labor and suffer another year.

The bishops hastened to the farm-house of Bemis. "As our

* These were not all present; but all had travelled within the Conference the past year, and were claimants.

work was done," writes Asbury, "and we were feeble, we came away to Waltham. It is no time to journalize; but I may remark that we had great peace in our Conference, and that we have an increase of five hundred members. I lodged at Mrs. Woodward's, and was kindly and comfortably entertained. The great wants of Boston are good religion and good water." He describes the community as spiritually "dead,"—"dead by nature, by formality, by sin;" and ascribes the moral lethargy of its churches to the habit of "reading" sermons.

The two bishops tarried at Waltham until Tuesday, when they departed on their route to the New York Conference, which was to be held this year at Ashgrove, N. Y.

Thursday, 17, Asbury writes, "We came to Ebenezer Colburn's, New Hampshire; and I preached upon Titus 2 : 11, 12. We had an open time, a baptism, and sacrament. Next day we labored through extreme heat, and over high hills, to Marlboro', and were glad to rest ourselves at Ebenezer Herrick's, opposite the west side of the great mountain called Monadnock."

He admires the aspects of the primitive settlements. "The soil," he writes, "though barren, exhibits, in its abundant productions of grass, oats, barley, rye, and potatoes, what the arm of labor and habits of economy and industry will do; out doors there is a well-kept stock of cattle, sheep and hogs; and in doors you see plenty of cheese, butter, and milk, and fish from the mill-ponds, which are wonderfully frequent, producing the finest trout and pike; the people are pictures of health, and appear to be of the old English stamina. Saturday, 19, we journeyed through the vale and pleasant town of Keene, and climbed along, height after height, towards Walpole; seven miles off, upon the south-west, we turned and came to Westmoreland, and held our Quarterly Meeting for Chesterfield circuit at Jonathan Winchester's, brother to the famous Universalist of that name. I opened the meeting in a new barn, upon Titus 2 : 13, 14. On the Sabbath we were crowded from seven o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon; the wind from the south-east blew in at the door, and it rained withal. Brother Whatcoat and Elder Ostrander preached before, and the

young men exhorted after Love Feast and the Sacrament. Monday, 21, we came over the mighty hills to Chesterfield: here we called upon John Bishop, and at four o'clock a few were got together, to whom I gave a lecture upon Heb. 12: 1, 2, 3. Next day we crossed the Connecticut river at Bennett's Ferry, and came into the city of Brattleboro', stopping at Joseph Jacobs'. We are now in Vermont. The stupendous steeps on each side of the river resemble those at Harper's Ferry, and the precipitous heights of the North river. We have rode eight hundred and fifty miles since we left Baltimore. My mind enjoys a great calm; and I have faith to believe that, as God is working gloriously in other parts of the continent, he will make a display of his power even here, and bid the dry bones live: I hope to hear of it at the Ashgrove Conference. Wednesday, 23, we had a meeting at a school-house near to Joseph Jacobs', in Guildford, Vt.: Brother Whatcoat preached upon the *perfect law of liberty*, and we had a gracious season. As we could not consent to wait three days for Whittingham Quarterly Meeting, we on Thursday took the track to Bennington, the mountain notwithstanding: we had been advised to go round nearly one hundred miles. We passed through Brattleboro', Marlboro', Wilmington, and the skirts of several other small towns. Our dinner we took with D. Mixen, and continued on to William Perry's, thirty-five miles. Our journey to-day was quite in the old style — Braddock's road, over the Alleghany Mountains. On Friday evening we reached Ashgrove, twenty-eight miles, by four o'clock — weary men, and tired horses. I have good health, severe temptations, but no murmuring or ill temper. I am once more in Cambridge, State of New York. Saturday, 25th, I spent in reading, writing, and meditation and prayer. Sabbath, 26th, at our church at Ashgrove, I spoke upon Col. 4: 2, 3; we had a quickening time. When I came across the mountain I found the season was exceeding dry, and was led out in prayer that the Lord would graciously give us of the fruits of the earth, and be merciful to man and beast: our exercises of faith and prayer, I believe, were not unavailing. On Saturday and Sunday we had rain; and now, the same blessings of a spiritual nature are wanting, for

which we wrestle with our God; and I believe souls will be converted at this Conference. Luther Bishop preached on the Sabbath day; and so we will continue every evening until next Monday or Tuesday week, stroke after stroke with the rod of the Lord, like Moses, until the waters of repentance flow from hearts of rock. On Monday Brother Whatcoat preached. My subject, on Tuesday, was Rom. 2:7: we rested at John Baker's. On Wednesday the Elders did not appear, and I was obliged to hold forth again — my text, Psalm 102:17. By deaths and removals, this Ashgrove society is diminished; but there will be a revival at this Conference. This is a very eligible place for Albany, York, Genesee, Pittsfield, and Vermont districts; but the Conference ought to be divided between the two old societies of York and Ashgrove. On Thursday I had to preach again."

The New York Conference commenced its session at Ashgrove, on Friday, July 1st. It was held "at John Baker's in the Holloway," which Asbury describes as "prettily environed with hills, a carpet of green spread beneath, and here and there around us fields clothed with the promise of an abundant harvest." There were nearly seventy preachers present, fifty of whom were in full membership in the Conference. Garrettson, Ostrander, Bostwick, and Brodhead, were there, with corps of strong men from their districts, who had been battling successfully for the truth during the year, from Long Island to Canada. James Coleman, who had travelled Redding circuit, Ct., in the midst of Calvinistic hostility, brought the news of a wide-spread reformation, and a gain of eighty members. Ebenezer Washburn, with no little opposition, had been extensively useful on Grranville circuit, Mass., and reported a gain of more than one hundred. Anson, who had been sent from the previous Conference to organize the church on Grand Isle, in Lake Champlain, had been instrumental in a general reformation, and returned more than one hundred members. Solomon Langdon and Paul Dustin had labored successfully on Vershire circuit, Vt., and gained about eighty. Landaff circuit, Vt., had prospered so greatly, under the labors of Phineas Peck and Martin Ruter, that it was now divided into two circuits, and reported

an increase of eighty-six. The devoted Thomas Branch had travelled alone the Lunenburg circuit, which reached into Canada; he passed among the towns and villages like a flame of fire, and now reported that its fifty-eight members had multipled to one hundred and four. Reuben Jones, who had begun the year on Bridgewater circuit, Vt., with ten members, returned fifty-four. Thomas Draper and Truman Bishop had gained, on Wethersfield and Woodstock circuits, Vt., eighty-one. Joseph Crawford had labored with his wonted success on Barnard circuit, Vt., and added seventy-seven to its membership. A gain of eighty-eight on Whittingham circuit had resulted from the labors of Elijah Ward and Asa Kent.

Asbury's faith had anticipated a powerful impression upon the condition of the neighboring churches, from this session. He was not disappointed. A large multitude assembled on the Sabbath; two thousand people crowded the village church and its precincts. Asbury stood in the door and preached to them, though exhausted and in pain, being "overcome by constant attention twelve hours a day to business in the Conference." Other and strong men blew the trumpet with a "certain sound," during the day. Hibbard, who was present, gives the following account of the occasion:

"Our Conference was attended by the blessing of God, as usual; and on Saturday arrangements were made for preaching on the Sabbath. Bishop Asbury was to commence in the morning, and preach the first sermon; Brother Garrettson to preach immediately after him; and Brother Thacher and Brother Moriarty to follow him, so as to have four sermons for the congregation that attended at the church. The next day the assembly was so great that it was appointed for the preachers to stand in the door of the house, and give up the seats in the house to the women, and the men were to stand out of doors. But the congregation was so large that they could not all hear. I, with other preachers, were on the outside of the congregation, and saw numbers turn away that we knew could not hear so as to understand. We felt grieved to see them gathering in little companies, talking of the news and politics of the day.

Some preachers proposed to me to go into a wagon, under the shade of some trees, a little way off, and begin to sing; and those in groups would gather round, and we could exhort them without disturbing the assembly at the meeting-house. My heart was warm with love. I went on. They followed. We began to sing. The people gathered around, and many of the brethren that could not hear at the church came also. We had, I suppose, near five hundred hearers. I prayed, and gave out for my text, '*God is Love.*' When I came to my application, the word was attended with power; and the wind blowing gently, carried my voice to the people at the church; they heard, and came flocking to our shade, around the wagon. I thought their meeting was out, and feeling the spirit of the Lord God upon me, I gave full vent to my feelings; and directly those who were in the church came rushing out to see what was going on at the wagon. Some jumped out of the windows, and the rush was so great at the door that Brother Garrettson gave over preaching before he had half done. Preachers and people flocked around the wagon. By this time I was nearly exhausted, and gave place for Brothers Thacher and Moriarty. I went to a house near by, and lay down to rest me; and after taking a little refreshment, I walked out to get some good of the meeting. The congregation was very large, — more than could well hear the preaching at the wagon; and hearing some in the church, I went in to see what they were about. I found they were holding a prayer-meeting, and there were a few preachers with them, sitting in the altar, and the seats in the house were nearly half filled with people. So I attended one or two prayers with them, and then I began to sing; and before we had sung the hymn through, the people crowded the church full. I thought I must exhort them once; and, to enforce the necessity of religion, I endeavored to illustrate the awful state of the damned." *

He proceeds to give an outline of his address, which must have been exceedingly graphic and powerful; for such was its effect, that the multitude broke out in sobs and supplications,

* Hibbard's Memoirs, p. 227-9.

and soon drowned his voice. Many, especially in the galleries, alarmed at the scene and their own emotions, ran out of the house; but the preachers without met them at the doors, and formed a circle for prayer, and directed them to the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "This prayer-meeting closed the labors of the day," but not till "nine persons professed to be converted." The scene had been one of great interest and excitement, and was reviewed the next morning in the Conference; but all debate about the interruption produced by Hibbard's discourse was closed by a reference of Asbury to the good results, and a gentle hint to Hibbard on the power of his voice, which Asbury said was "heard distinctly a half mile." Methodist preachers never, in those days, allowed any one in their assemblies to escape the conviction of the word for lack of hearing; when preaching, they were seldom content to have their immediate audience alone hear them, but sounded out the alarm so that it usually rung through the neighborhood.

The session closed on Tuesday, the fifth of July, having continued through five days. The next day the bishops were *en route* again southward, rejoicing over the general prospects of the cause to which their lives were so entirely devoted. "By a fair and accurate computation," wrote Asbury, in a few days, "I judge that we have added, exclusive of the dead, the removed, and the expelled and withdrawn, 17,300. Our total for the year 1803 is 104,070 members: in 1771 there were about 300 Methodists in New York, 250 in Philadelphia, and a few in Jersey; I then longed for 100,000; — now I want 200,000, — nay, thousands upon thousands."

CHAPTER XVIII.

APPOINTMENTS AND PREACHERS.

Appointments. — Statistics. — John Robertson. — Pastoral Fidelity. — Death. — Seth Crowell. — Sketch of his History. — Character. — Elijah Willard. — Early Life. — Christian Experience.

THE appointments in the Eastern States, made at the New England and New York Conferences of 1803, were—

BOSTON DISTRICT. George Pickering, *Presiding Elder*. *Boston*, Thomas Lyell, Epaphras Kibby; *Lynn*, Peter Jayne; *Marblehead*, Daniel Webb; *Nantucket*, Joshua Soule; *Provincetown*, Allen H. Cobb; *Providence*, Alexander McLane, Noble W. Thomas; *Norton*, Edward Whittle, John Robertson; *Newport*, Thomas Lyell, two months; *Needham*, Reuben Hubbard, Thos. Ravlin; *Salisbury*, David Bachelor; *Hawke*, Daniel Jones; *Kingston*, Nehemiah Coye; *Poplin*, William Goodhue.

DISTRICT OF MAINE. Joshua Taylor, *Presiding Elder*. *Falmouth*, Alfred Metcalf, Dan Perry; *Poland*, Joel Wicker; *Bethel*, David Stimson; *Readfield*, Joseph Snelling, Thomas Perry; *Hallowell*, Aaron Humphrey, Samuel Hillman; *Norridgewock*, Joseph Baker, Ebenezer Easty; *Penobscot*, Philip Munger, Samuel Thompson; *Union River*, Asa Pattie, Daniel Dudley; *Bristol*, Comfort C. Smith; *Union*, Daniel Ricker; *Bowdoinham*, True Glidden.

PITTSFIELD DISTRICT. Sylvester Hutchinson, *Presiding Elder*. *Pittsfield*, Elias Vanderlip, E. Ward, R. Searle; *Adams*, Martin Ruter; *Cambridge*, David Brown, Luman Andrus; *Brandon*, Henry Eames, Ebenezer Stevens; *Vergennes*, William Anson; *Fletcher*, Joseph Mitchell, Seth Crowell, O. Hall; *Grand Isle*, Daniel Brumley.

NEW LONDON DISTRICT. Daniel Ostrander, *Presiding Elder*.

New London, John Nichols, William Pickett; *Pomfret*, John Gove, Dyer Burge; *Tolland*, Augustus Jocelyn, Elijah Bachelor; *Ashburnham*, Joshua Crowell, Phineas Cook; *Middletown*, Abner Wood, Nathan Emery; *Granville*, Ebenezer Washburn, Nathan Felch; *Litchfield*, Caleb Morris, John Sweet.

Vermont District. Joseph Crawford, *Presiding Elder*. *Vershire*, Samuel Draper, Oliver Beale; *Landaff*, T. Branch, P. Dustin, S. Langdon; *Lunenburg*, Reuben Jones, Elijah Willard; *Hanover*, John Brodhead, Andrew Kernagan; *Bridgewater*, Elijah Hedding; *Wethersfield* and *Woodstock*, Truman Bishop, Ebenezer Fairbank; *Barnard*, Asa Kent, Thomas Skeel; *Athens*, William Pettigrew, Joel Winch; *Whittingham*, Phineas Peck, Caleb Dustin.

To these should be added *Redding, Conn.*, which was included in Garrettson's New York district, and travelled this year by James Campbell, and N. U. Tompkins.

The ecclesiastical year began with *five* districts, and part of a sixth; *forty-eight* circuits and *eighty-six* preachers, including Garrettson. The districts remained the same in number as at the preceding sessions, but were greatly enlarged; there had been a gain of *three* circuits and *six* preachers. The new circuits were Ashburnham, Mass., and Bristol and Bowdoinham, Me.

We have but slight information respecting the preachers who appear this year for the first time on the roll of the New England appointments.

John Robertson was born in New Providence, N. J., March 31, 1783. His parents trained him up in the fear of God, and the result, as usual in such cases, was that he early became interested for the welfare of his soul. He was converted in his eighteenth year, and joined the Methodist Episcopal church. His devotion and gifts led his brethren to encourage him in public labors as an exhorter, and afterwards as a local preacher. He entered the Itinerant ministry the present year, and was appointed to Norton circuit, Mass. His subsequent appointments were, Vershire, Vt., 1804; Croton, N. Y., 1805; Pittsfield, Mass., 1806; Saratoga, N. Y., 1807; Newberg, N. Y.,

1808; Grand Isle, Vt., 1809; New York, 1810; Bergen, N. Y., 1811; Philadelphia, Pa., 1812; Staten Island, N. Y., 1813; Essex, N. J., 1814 and 1815; Trenton, N. J., 1816; located in 1817, on account of debility; 1818, reädmitted into the Philadelphia Conference, and stationed in Bristol, Pa.; Chester, Pa., 1819; St. John's, Philadelphia, 1820, where he finished his course, August 8th, in the thirty-ninth year of his age.

His departure was sudden, but not unexpected, for his enfeebled constitution, and increasing symptoms of mortal disease, led him to be looking and watching for the coming of his Lord. On the morning of his death, as he was about rising from his bed, he was seized with hemorrhage of the lungs, and instantly expired. Though young when he entered the ministry, and not aged when he departed to his rest, Mr. Robertson was a genuine example of our primitive ministry. He was distinguished by great simplicity of manners and character. His personal attachments were generous and enduring. He possessed talents which secured him general esteem as a preacher, and he watched for souls as one who must give account; and was therefore particularly assiduous in pastoral labors, visiting and warning his people, like Paul, from house to house. He afforded a worthy example, in this respect. His brethren of the Philadelphia Conference say, "He was industrious and indefatigable in his ministerial labors, and in visits from house to house, instructing and edifying the various members of the flock intrusted to his care. In the stations he occupied at different times, he was in the habit of paying his pastoral visits to almost every family in the neighborhood in which he lived, whether of the society or not, and praying in each family, as far as circumstances would admit, and he could obtain permission; and this course he pursued in the last station he filled, until within a few days of his death." *

He was faithful unto death. Only two days before he fell, he was in his pulpit, admonishing his hearers that he spoke to them as a dying man, who was shortly to appear before God, and account for his ministrations among them. On the next Sab-

* Minutes of 1821.

bath his funeral sermon was preached from the same pulpit, to a large and weeping congregation.

Seth Crowell was one of the heroes of this early period of our history, — a man of great bodily infirmities, and mental conflicts, but of indomitable energy and zeal. He was born in Tolland, Conn., 1781, and converted to God in Chatham, Conn., when about sixteen years old. Trained in the active duties of Methodism, as a young layman, he was soon found gifted for more public services, and was licensed to officiate as a local preacher. He was subsequently called out, by the Presiding Elder, to travel the New London circuit, and was received into the New York Conference of 1801 — a period preëminent in the number and character of the men who then began their evangelical travels in the North, the list of whom contains such names as Oliver Beale, Thomas Branch, Laban Clark, Martin Ruter, Elijah Hedding, Samuel Draper, Ebenezer Washburn, &c. Mr. Crowell was but twenty years old when he thus cast in his lot with the self-sacrificing band; his youthful spirit caught the infection of their zeal and heroism, and he presented himself as a pioneer for Upper Canada, among whose wildernesses a few Methodist evangelists had been "sounding the alarm" for two or three years. Bangs, in his History of Methodism, says, "He was a young preacher of great zeal, and of the most indefatigable industry; and going into that country, he soon caught the flame of Divine love which had been enkindled by the instrumentality of Messrs. Worster, Coate, and Dunham. He entered into the work with great energy and perseverance, and God blessed his labors with much success. So greatly had God prospered the labors of his faithful servants in this province, that there were returned, in the Minutes of Conference for the year 1801, 1159 members of the church. It had, indeed, extended into the lower province, on the Ottawa river, an English settlement about fifty miles west of Montreal."

His first appointment in Canada was on the Niagara circuit, with Joseph Sawyer, a companion who could not fail to inspirit his associates by his own resistless energy. In 1802, he travelled Oswegatchie and Ottawa circuit. In 1803, he returned to

the States, and was colleague of the laborious Joseph Mitchell on Fletcher circuit, Vermont In 1804, he was alone on Brandon circuit, Vermont. His subsequent appointments were, in 1805, Albany circuit; 1806, New York city, with Aaron Hunt, Truman Bishop and Freeborn Garrettson; 1807, Conference missionary, with Garrettson and Robert Dillon; 1808, Schenectady; 1809, Newberg, with John Finnegan. In 1810, he returned to New England, and travelled the Pittsfield circuit, Mass.; 1811, Chatham, with John B. Matthias; 1812, Redding, Conn. In 1813, his enfeebled health compelled him to retire to the superannuated and worn-out ranks, where he continued three years, when, with partially recovered strength, he resumed active service, and at his own request was appointed to labor at large as missionary within the bounds of the New York Conference. The next two years he spent in New York, and in 1819 received a location. He had done good and brave service in the Itinerant field, and possessed the sympathies of his brethren; so that, after five years location, they reädmitted him to the Conference, though he was incapable of the labors of a charge. They placed him on the list of superannuated and worn-out members, that he might die among them, and have a claim on their funds while he should survive. He lingered but about two years longer, a remnant of the old chivalry of the ministry. He was a great sufferer from nervous disease; but, though his trials were very severe, he at length triumphed over them all, and departed to his final rest in peace, July 6th, 1826.

He possessed superior talents, "and," say his brethren, "was often heard to speak in demonstration of the spirit and with power, and was instrumental in the conversion of many souls."* During his labors in New York, a revival took place, such as was never before seen in that city. Dr. Bangs says, "In the midst of the shakings and tremblings among the congregations during this great work, Seth Crowell was eminently useful, preaching with the 'Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,' beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God, and accompanying all his efforts with mighty prayer and faith. When in the vigor

* Minutes, 1827.

of his strength, the warmth of his affections and his longing desires for the salvation of souls led him forth with great zeal, both in and out of the pulpit; and he sometimes preached with a power and eloquence which overwhelmed his congregations 'with speechless awe and silent love.' Nor was it mere declamation. His sermons were sometimes deeply argumentative, and his positions supported by Scripture texts so appositely that it amounted to a moral demonstration of their truth; and not unfrequently sinners would be constrained to cry aloud for mercy, while he was making his searching appeals to their consciences. His preaching was frequently of a controversial character. Against the peculiarities of Calvinism and Universalism he bore a strong and pointed testimony, delighting to exhibit the universal love of God to man on the one hand, and the great danger of abusing it on the other, by obstinately refusing to comply with the conditions of the Gospel."*

Elijah Willard still continues among us, in old age and poverty, but trusting tranquilly in God, with that faith which sustained him amidst the trials of our early ministry. He was born in Ashburnham, Mass., April 26, 1782, and trained carefully in the religious education of the times, his father being a deacon of the Congregational church. When but eight years old, he thinks he experienced a change of heart; but not having suitable guidance, fell away, He still, however, retained a deep sense of Divine things, and the habit of prayer. In his twelfth year, the death of his father, who departed in the faith, leaving a good testimony for the Gospel, revived much his religious interest. About this period, he heard for the first time a Methodist preacher. "I listened," he writes, "with attention and delight, and had an immediate conviction that these men were the servants of the Most High God, and showed the way of salvation."† Not many months afterward, he heard Jesse Lee. "I wish I could describe the emotions," he says, "which filled my mind, as I surveyed him from head to foot, when he stood up; there was a power and authority in his word which I had never witnessed before, and the impression of his text, discourse, and appearance,

* History of the M. E. Church, vol. III., p. 375. † Letter to the author.

is still indelible in my mind. I would have joined the little Class at Ashburnham, which at first consisted of but seven members; but my Congregational associates discountenanced the design, and warned me against the Methodists as deceivers." In 1799, he was more thoroughly awakened to seek the salvation of his soul, under the preaching of John Nichols, who was then on Ashburnham circuit. From June to September, he was in profound distress of mind, such as has been repeatedly described in these pages. "Some time in August," he writes, "that wonderful man of God, Elijah R. Sabin, came into the village; he preached, and most of the young people who heard him went home praying for God's mercy. I was not present, but saw two persons, who belonged to the family where I lived, deeply affected. I was smitten to the heart with the apprehension that they would enter into the kingdom of heaven, and I be shut out." He now gave up the world, and especially gay company, and began to seek God with all earnestness. His anguish increased, and he asked himself what more he could do; when his own conscience answered that he was still ashamed of the reproached people who were leading him into the way of life, and would probably not own them, if he should even find relief through their prayers. He settled in his mind the purpose to adhere to them, and acknowledge their usefulness to him; and "when I became fully willing," he continues, "to give my whole heart to God and acknowledge his cause, I found comfort." On the 15th of September, 1799, while praying in the fields, the light burst upon his soul; he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as his sufficient and present Saviour, sprung upon his feet, and adored the Divine mercy with inexpressible joy and undoubting trust. He slept little that night, for his soul was filled with new and intense thoughts. It had passed through its regeneration, and was a new creature. This was the great epoch of his life, from which it has taken its whole subsequent direction.

He now joined the little band of Methodist believers, and entered heartily into their labors and struggles; but, for a considerable time, resisted their advice, and the convictions of his own conscience, that he should more openly aid the infant cause

by public exhortation. He had been taught to believe that a liberal education was essential to the pastoral office, and his lack in this respect seemed insurmountable. His mind was much distressed with conflicting impressions, until a providential opportunity brought him to a conclusion of the question. "A licensed exhorter came," he writes, "from a distance, to hold a meeting with us. He commenced the services by singing, prayer, and a chapter from the Bible; but, after speaking a few words, sat down, confounded with embarrassment. I rose and spoke about half an hour, on a verse of the chapter which he had read, and was blessed with much freedom of thought and utterance. But I felt alarmed when he said to me afterwards that I must preach in the afternoon; telling me that it was God's will, and the Lord had closed his mouth that the duty might devolve upon me. I did not consent, but he commenced the meeting; the word was like fire shut up in my bones, and I could not refrain; I spoke with still more manifest help from the Lord."

In this manner was Mr. Willard brought more publicly to labor for Christ. He still hesitated, and resisted his duty; but the way opened more and more before him, and at last, after laboring two or three years as a local preacher, he joined the Itinerant ranks the present year. He preached several years in Vermont, Canada, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, — "mostly in new settlements; and," he writes, "after spending all my earlier earnings in equipping myself with horse, saddle-bags, &c., I did not receive forty dollars a year, in all my appointments." He expended the property which came to him from his father's estate, and at last failing in health, he had to locate. After remaining in the local ministry several years, he was, like Seth Crowell, reädmitted to the Conference, that he might receive aid from its funds, and die among his ministerial brethren. He now resides at Lynn, where so many of our worn-out veterans have spent their last days. "I have witnessed," he writes, "in my early ministry, a great work in the wildernesses of Vermont, New Hampshire and Canada. I have since been afflicted with sickness, and racked and tortured with pain; but my soul has been happy in God; the manifestations of

Divine grace comfort me, the visions of his face have overpowering charms, which my pen cannot describe nor my tongue express."

This year, fell at his post, on Cambridge circuit, DAVID BROWN, in the 44th year of his age. His colleague, Hibbard, pronounced him "as good a man as ever came from Ireland." He commenced his ministerial travels in 1794, and labored devotedly nine years, on Dutchess, Columbia, Croton, New Rochelle, Long Island, Redding, Litchfield and Cambridge circuits. "There have," say the old Minutes, "been few, even among the best of men, who have lived so generally beloved, and died so regretted, as this holy man. His unaffected piety commanded esteem. His cheerfulness, seasoned with all the gentleness of love, won for him the affections, and his meek wisdom and stability sealed to him the friendship, as well as love, of all who had the happiness of his acquaintance. He had a peculiar excellence in reproof. The edge of it was so keen and so tempered as to give at the time rather pleasure than pain, yet so directed as to produce with unerring certainty its effect; and, generally, after his departure, his supposed pleasantry was first perceived to have had a serious meaning — but he lost no love by his reproofs. Thus graced and qualified of his God, he could not go where his endeavors were not blessed. Discord fled before him, for the God of peace was with him, and a universal harmony brooded over the face of the circuit."

His exhortations were remarkably effective, and "many witnesses will arise in the great day, that his preaching was not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power. Under his administration, the blessing descended as the dew, with a general overspreading influence, that reached to every part of the circuit. He lived a man and a preacher of peace, and in peace he died. The terrible pains he had to endure under the dysentery, which brought him to his end, were so tempered with grace as to produce, even in the sharpest conflicts, a peace uninterrupted by any complainings. Yet would grace so prevail as occasionally to raise the river of peace in his soul into a flood-tide of joy; and thus triumphantly

entered the servant into the joy of his Lord. The words he last spoke were — 'The Lord's will be done; my anchor is cast within the veil.'" *

Being called in the course of the year to preach a funeral sermon, "while reading the following lines in the hymn which he gave out on that occasion,

'Who next shall be called away?
My merciful Lord, is it I?'

As though he had a presentiment of his death, he laid his hand upon his breast and repeated,

'My merciful Lord, is it I?'

It was the last sermon he ever preached. His was the very next funeral the people were called to attend. When they bore his body to the grave, they remembered the affecting manner in which he had read his hymn." †

* Minutes, 1804. † Methodist Magazine, 1827.

CHAPTER XIX.

EVENTS AND RESULTS OF THE YEAR.

Maine. — Joshua Taylor. — Major Ilsley. — Methodism in Portland. — Joseph Snelling. — Vermont. — Ebenezer Washburn. — Extraordinary Scenes on Granville Circuit. — Hedding in New Hampshire. — General Conference. — Statistics.

The Itinerants in Maine labored successfully, and gathered into their scattered societies an addition of three hundred and fifty-four members, during the present year. At the Conference in Boston, it was found difficult to supply the province with able men. Merritt, Soule, Kibby, Williston, and similar preachers who labored and suffered there, while planting the first societies, had either located, or were demanded by the older portions of the church. In these circumstances, Joshua Taylor, who had been appointed the previous year to Boston district, volunteered to return to the hardships of the province, and Asbury appointed him its Presiding Elder. His vast district was the only one within what is now the State of Maine, and comprehended eleven circuits. He superintended the labors of seventeen men. "I was enabled," he writes,* "to enter this field again with some firmness and zeal, and saw many happy days and months there." In several places he witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It was during this year that he procured for the young society at Portland their first chapel, as related in our sketch of Methodism in that city. "I started," he says, "in the month of March, for the General Conference, at Baltimore, and on my way spent a Sabbath in Portland, where I preached in a school-house, in which a respectable local preacher had been ministering to a few Methodists for some time. Major Daniel Ilsley had offered, as I learned, to purchase the

* Communication to the author.

old Protestant Episcopal chapel, which had just been moved to Federal-street, and give it to our small society, if the latter would repair it; but they were too few in number to raise the necessary funds. On Monday, I called on the major, and told him that I thought I could procure means for the requisite repairs on my route, and would meanwhile become responsible for them. He took me with him to the proprietor of the edifice, purchased it at once, and conveyed it to the church, — a generous deed, which I think should not be forgotten, as it was done by a benefactor who was not one of our number, and has had no unimportant connection with the history of Methodism in Portland." Mr. Taylor returned from Baltimore prepared to fulfil his engagement. He was stationed in the city the ensuing year, and at its close returns of members were reported for the first time in the minutes from Portland. They amounted to fifty-one. When he began his labors in the city, there were but eleven, all of whom, except two, were females.

Joseph Snelling, who was appointed this year to Readfield circuit, travelled extensively in other portions of the province. He gives us a glimpse of his success. "The reformation," he says, "continued to go on in Livermore, and they soon built a meeting-house. I was requested to preach the dedication sermon, which I did, and the Lord added his blessing. Two young men, who attended the meeting and sat together, were both wrought up by the spirit of God; both experienced religion, and both became preachers. There was also a revival in Vienna and Farmington. He travelled extensively, also, on the Norridgewock circuit, and witnessed good results.

On the Vermont district, which included portions of New Hampshire, Joseph Crawford superintended an indomitable band of Itinerants, among whom were Hedding, Branch, Beale, Draper, Brodhead, Kent, and Willard. They still had some conflicts, — the hostilities of competing sects and the exposures of a new country and a severe climate; but they abounded none the less in zeal and labors. They added, the present year, three circuits to the district, and gathered into their Classes

nearly two hundred and fifty converts, while they replenished also the churches of their opposers.

Ebenezer Washburn travelled Granville circuit this year. He was still involved in litigation for the rights of the church, but witnessed some interesting scenes in his field of labor. "I preached," he writes, "in a school-house, in Blanford, about one mile and a half from the Beach Hill meeting-house, one Sabbath evening; and when the usual exercise was closed, it thundered, and lightened, and rained very hard. I said to the people, 'Since God, in his providence, confines us here, perhaps it may be profitable to spend the time in prayer, or some other religious exercise.' Two young men rose, one after the other, and gave a short but interesting relation of their Christian experience; and then a man by the name of Farnum, somewhat past middle age, who had been a violent opposer of the Methodists, rose up and said, 'I am the oldest and greatest sinner in the house. I want you all to pray for me. I am determined, if there is mercy in heaven for so vile a sinner as I, by the grace of God to seek till I find it.' As he spoke, the tears flowed from his eyes, and he trembled in every joint. A number were awakened at that meeting. Mr. Farnum experienced religion in a few days; and when I came round again, I baptized him and several others, and received them into the church as probationers. At another time, I preached at the house of Samuel Mills, in Great Barrington, and God attended the word with power. We had a prayer-meeting that evening, at the same place, and while Eben Smith, one of the preachers, was praying, several fell to the floor. There was a Mrs. V—— there, who had been a bitter persecutor of her husband; she was standing near the fire weeping, and her husband was lying at her feet, apparently like one dead. I went to her, and asked her if these things tried her. She said, 'I feel the most tried with myself.' — I said, 'Do you think your husband feigns this?' — She said 'No; I know him too well to believe that. I believe he is as sincere a man as ever lived; and if this work is wrought by the spirit of God, I wish I might feel it.' — 'Amen,' said I; and she instantly fell, like a lifeless statue, upon the stone hearth, directly before the fire. She was

moved back upon the floor, where she lay, with scarcely the appearance of life, till a late hour of the night. When she came to herself, so as to rise and sit up, she appeared as distressed and horror-smitten a person as I ever saw. She left the place, earnestly crying to God for mercy. In the course of the day it pleased God to turn her spiritual captivity, and bring her into the liberty of the Gospel of his Son. For about one hour, during that prayer-meeting, the slain of the Lord almost covered the floor; and more than one-half the people in the room were prostrated and helpless. All except Mrs. V—— arose rejoicing; some in the deepening of the work of grace, and some in the witness of justification by faith in Christ."

Elijah Hedding labored this year with extraordinary success on Bridgewater circuit, N. H. His journeys were about one hundred miles each week; he preached at least twice a day, and had regular appointments in thirteen towns. Though alone on the circuit, he supplied these appointments faithfully, and a flame of religious excitement spread, under his powerful labors, over the whole circuit. It is thought that hundreds were awakened, and the whole community seemed moved with the intense interest. He founded many societies which still continue to flourish.

Before the end of the present ecclesiastical year, the General Conference assembled in the city of Baltimore. There were, from the New England Conference present, George Pickering, Joshua Taylor, Thomas Lyell, and Reuben Hubbard. All the members from the New York Conference, save one, were men whose names are familiar to us as New England preachers; they were Freeborn Garrettson, Michael Coate, Ralph Williston, John Wilson, Daniel Ostrander, Augustus Jocelyn, Joseph Crawford, Nathan Emery, James Campbell, Aaron Hunt, Abner Wood, and Joseph Sawyer.

Nothing was done at this session which particularly affected the church in New England, except the definitive settlement of the boundaries of the Annual Conferences. It was ordered that the New England Conference should include the Province of Maine, and the Boston, New London and Vermont districts;

and that the New York Conference should comprise the New York, Pittsfield, Albany, and Upper Canada districts. By this arrangement, two large districts — New London and Vermont, including about twenty circuits — were transferred to the jurisdiction of the New England Conference.

Lee remarks of the denomination generally, "that religion prospered among us very much this year, and we had pleasing accounts from almost every part of the connection."* The total returns of members were 113,134; the gains of the year, 9064. These statistics exhibit a very considerable advancement, but the increase was little more than half of what it had been the previous year. The aggregate membership in New England was 10,699, giving an increase for the year of nearly 1000.

*Short History, &c. Anno 1804.

CHAPTER XX.

EARLY CHURCHES IN VERMONT AND NEW HAMPSHIRE.

Lunenburg. — Robert McKoy. — Robert Braden. — First Class. — Joseph Crawford. — A Mob. — Brodhead. — Dalton. — Sandwich. — Providential Occurrence. — Singular Introduction of Methodism into Athens. — Grand Isle. — Primitive Love Feasts. — Preachers. — Incidents.

We drop here, briefly, the thread of our narrative, — as we shall occasionally do hereafter, — to survey more locally some of the results of the labors of Methodism in the Eastern States, as shown in the formation of individual churches. The history of several of our most interesting societies has been recorded in a preceding volume.* From the hundreds of Methodist churches which now dot the surface of New England, we can select but few, and they the earliest, but not now the most important.

For the following facts respecting the introduction of Methodism into Lunenburg, Vt., and neighboring towns, we are indebted to a correspondent,† who writes that they were furnished him by Robert McKoy, or, as he is affectionately called in his own neighborhood, "Father McKoy." Mr. McKoy moved into Lunenburg near the close of the last century, being then some thirty years of age. He there became acquainted with Robert Braden, who was converted in Ireland, under the preaching of Mr. Wesley, and who was also one of the venerated "Fathers" of Methodism in Vermont. Through him Mr. McKoy first heard of the Methodists. It seems that this acquaintance led him to some seriousness, so that, when Rosebrook Crawford visited Lancaster, as we have heretofore noticed, and several persons were awakened under his labors, Mr. McKoy, though he did not hear him, yet hearing of him,

* Stratford, Redding, Easton, Norwalk and Hartford, Conn.; Warren and Bristol, R. I.; Lynn and Boston, Mass. See Mem. of the Int. of Methodism, &c., chap. XIII.

† Rev. J. S. Loveland.

was led more earnestly than ever to inquire what he should do to be saved. At the same time, John Picket, a blacksmith and a neighbor of his, was in a similar state of mind, though they were mutually ignorant of each other's feelings. As the visit of Crawford was a transient one, and it was uncertain when he would return, if ever, they conceived the idea of going to Bradford, fifty miles distant, to hear a Methodist preacher, that being the nearest appointment of the Itinerant. They travelled to the place; both were deeply awakened; they went forward for prayers, and both were happily converted on the spot. Joseph Crawford was the preacher, and he was invited to visit their village; which he accordingly did, and preached with much effect. At his first visit, he formed a Class of twelve persons. Mr. Braden and two of his daughters were members of this Class, and three of the original members became local preachers, viz., John Picket, Ozias Savage, and Robert McKoy. Mr. McKoy received his first appointment from Bishop Hedding; "Father" Savage, now of Lisbon, N. H., has been extensively useful and popular as a preacher. Lunenburg became the head-quarters of a circuit which bore its name. The preaching of Joseph Crawford was attended with remarkable power; his congregations were bathed in tears. At the next appointment, he went to Guildhall, where a mob attempted to stop him. A sheriff came to Mr. McKoy, and told him that the town authorities were determined to drive or carry the preacher out of the place. The anticipated mob deterred the people from attending the meeting, so that no one came except those who accompanied the preacher from Lunenburg. He, however, began the service, and while engaged in prayer, the sheriff, at the head of a mob of fifteen, entered the room. Crawford took for his text, "This sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against." As he proceeded with his sermon, the sheriff interrupted him, and finally threatened to put him out of the house. At this stage of the meeting, a man who had come from Jefferson, N. H., some twenty miles, on purpose to hear a Methodist preacher, persuaded the mob to hear him through, except the Congregationalist deacon, who doggedly refused to listen to the discourse, and went out. This

deacon was one of the leaders of the rabble. A result of the meeting was the awakening of one of the company, who subsequently became a Congregationalist minister.

At the next appointment, which was at Lancaster, Crawford, not being able to go himself, sent John Langdon and Rosebrook Crawford. It was during this visit that the riotous events occurred which we have mentioned in our sketch of Laban Clark. Mr. McKoy, who was an eye and ear witness, adds a few particulars. The preachers were invited to visit a sick man: and when they came out from his house, they found themselves surrounded by the rabble. They were taken first to the "parson's," the mob stating that the "parson" had offered to give a cow to get rid of them. After Langdon, who, as we have seen, braved them manfully, had been abandoned by them, they dealt abundant abuse to poor Rosebrook Crawford, the exhorter, throwing him down, and stopping his mouth with a handkerchief, in order to prevent his singing, — a practice, by the way, to which the early Methodists seemed always inclined in similar circumstances, as the best "soft answer" which "turneth away wrath." They tried to ride him on a rail, and to make him promise not to return again; but not succeeding, they finally "ducked" him in the river, gave three cheers, and left him on its opposite bank. This was Saturday, and the next day the hard-pressed laborers, nothing daunted, held a meeting in Lunenburg.

The following year, Elijah R. Sabin was circuit preacher; and the first Quarterly Meeting was held in the house of Ozias Savage, John Brodhead presiding. Mr. Savage still lives, in his eighty-fourth year. He thus speaks of Brodhead and this Quarterly Meeting:* "About the year 1798, I removed from Rockingham, Vt., to Lunenburg. There I first became acquainted with the Methodists. I think it was in 1800 that John Brodhead came to Lunenburg with several others, and commenced preaching the Gospel. The power of God attended the word in a wonderful manner. Sinners were pricked to the heart and sought the Saviour; backsliders were reclaimed, and the work

* In a letter to the author.

of God spread in every direction. My own soul was made alive (although I had formerly professed religion), and I became interested and united with the preachers in the work. I soon became attached to Mr. Brodhead, and invited and welcomed him to my house, where religious meetings were frequently held. I recollect, the first Quarterly Meeting in that vicinity was held at my house. The good work spread, — a persecution soon followed, — the enemies of the cross of Christ bitterly opposed its progress, and used every means to prevent the interest from going on. I was blamed for harboring and encouraging those who were to 'turn the world upside down, and destroy all good order in society.' One of my neighbors even told me, that, were it not for the law, the people would hang me. But, notwithstanding all that could be said, the reformation continued to extend. Brodhead was a man suited to the times. Of great boldness and energy of character, he cared for none of their threats. He possessed great presence of mind, and was always engaged in his Master's work. I think he was one of the most powerful men, in prayer and exhortation, I ever heard. He was, in short, a man of God, — full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and greatly respected by the church. If it were known that Brodhead was to preach, he would not lack for hearers, but multitudes would flock to hear the word of life from his lips."

Various forms of persecution were resorted to in following years; but they usually recoiled upon the persecutors. In some instances, the leaders of mobs were put down by their companions.

Mr. McKoy mentions a great reformation under the ministry of Elijah Willard, who had a colleague by the name of James Willard. James Willard was an overwhelming preacher. Those who came to oppose often fell, like dead men, under his word. The old Lunenburg circuit is now subdivided, and its range of territory dotted with thriving churches.

After Methodism had gained a feeble foothold in Lunenburg, it was soon introduced into Dalton, N. H. The first Methodist in that town was Jacob Barrows. He became an exhorter, and held meetings in his own house. A Class was formed soon after

he moved into the town. About the year 1803, Elijah Willard, who was stationed on Lunenburg circuit, preached in Dalton; and E. Wells, then a local preacher, visited it about the same time. They were followed, the next year, by Joel Winch, who preached at Mr. Nichols', in the lower part of the town, and at Mr. Barrows'. Not far from this time, Mr. Buffington, a local preacher from Lunenburg, preached in the town.

The first regular Methodist preaching commenced here about the year 1805, when Susanna Braden, daughter of Mr. Braden, already mentioned, married a Mr. Crandall, and moved into the town. Her father came soon after, and died there in the faith, during the Conference year of 1812–13. Rev. Joseph Lull preached his funeral sermon; and he was regretted as one of the lay-founders of Methodism in Vermont. The first Quarterly Meeting in Dalton was held at the Brooks tavern stand. Solomon Langdon was then the circuit preacher. He labored mightily in word and doctrine, and laid permanently the foundations of Methodism in this region. The society at Dalton, with its neighboring appointment at Bethlehem, now (1850) includes more than one hundred and fifty members.

Methodism was introduced into SANDWICH, N. H., by an apparently very slight occurrence. The New England Conference met at Buxton, Me., July 15th, 1804. Two preachers, on their way thither, found it necessary to tarry all night in Sandwich, and inquired for a Freewill Baptist family, where they might be entertained, — their doctrines not being so obnoxious to that sect as to others. They were directed to call on a Mr. Webster, the father-in-law of Rev. Lewis Bates; they accordingly called, and were hospitably entertained. The preacher, who led in family prayer, before kneeling, conversed personally, upon the subject of religion, with each one present. "This," said the lady of the house, "was something new to me." He asked Mr. Webster if he enjoyed religion, and received an answer in the negative; then turning to the other preacher, he said, "We have been wrongly directed, and have made a mistake." — "Thank God for the mistake!" replied the second preacher. The word of exhortation was given. "It went," said

Mrs. Webster, "to my heart;" and the serious impressions she then received were never effaced until she was converted. The first Methodist sermon preached in the town was delivered in a very short time after, at the same place, by John Brodhead, and the following year Tuftenboro' circuit was formed. Lewis Bates was the circuit preacher. A Class was soon organized in Sandwich. Mr. Webster and his wife, and Elijah Skinner, were among the first members. The work spread so powerfully that at the next Conference the territory was divided into two circuits. Sandwich now reports more than 200 members.*

We are indebted to the venerable Asa Kent for the following account of the introduction of Methodism into Athens, Vt., and the neighboring towns. "In 1800, they had no religious meetings regularly in Athens. The Congregationalists and Baptists preached there occasionally; but it was not known that there was a man in the town that professed religion; and certainly there were none willing to pray at a funeral, and if they did not send out of town for a minister, they buried their dead without ceremony. The means by which Methodist preaching was introduced were of a novel character, the particulars of which I learned the next year, 1801, when I was directed to form a circuit, having Athens for my head-quarters. They were in substance as follows: — A local preacher, by the name of Ashur Smith, of Pittsfield circuit, I think, was disposed to travel northward; he made a short stay at Whittingham, and then came to Townsend, some thirty miles; and finding they had no preaching there, called on Deacon Rawson, and professed to be a preacher of the Gospel. There was a small meeting-house in the town, and the Congregationalists had a small church, and were in want of a minister. The deacon, considering this providential, wished him to stop and preach. They were so much pleased with his preaching, that they engaged him to preach for a year. He was very active in visiting and preaching in different parts of the town, and in adjoining towns, especially in Athens. He was highly extolled, and then they concluded they had

* We owe to Rev. Pickens Boynton for our information respecting Dalton and Sandwich.

the very man they needed. But the ministers of Grafton, Westminster, and Putney, were not so well pleased with his operations, considering him an inexperienced and incautious young man, who needed good advice. The Putney minister accordingly gave him a little brotherly admonition, — particularly for two things judged to be improper. He told him he thought he had accepted too *small a salary*, as the people in that country were disposed to beat a minister down as low as possible before they would hire him; and by *his* preaching so cheap, other towns might think they ought to give their ministers no more; whereas they ought to be united, and stand by each other, and maintain their rights to a fair salary. Another error was, his preaching so much, in and out of town. 'If you begin in this way, you will be obliged to continue, or the people will complain of you; and if you do it, others will conclude that their ministers must do so too. This will add greatly to our labors, and may involve us in many difficulties.' Ashur, however, went on his way rejoicing; but just before the year expired, it was cautiously whispered around that he was a Methodist. This passed with some as a downright slander; but the matter soon became serious, as it was ascertained that he had been off somewhere to a Methodist meeting, and Deacon R. was requested to make the investigation. They met, and the following conversation in substance took place: — 'It is reported, Mr. Smith, that you are a Methodist.' — 'Well, sir, it is true.' — 'Why did you not tell us, at first, what church you belonged to?' — 'Because you never asked me a word about it.' — 'But you have deceived us.' — 'You know, Deacon R., that when I came among you, I professed to be a minister of the Gospel of Christ; as such I have labored among you; and now permit me to ask, if you, and the church, have not been satisfied with the doctrine you have heard.' — 'I have heard no complaint about that; but the Methodists hold to *dreadful errors!*' — 'Believe me, sir, I have preached to you every point of doctrine which the Methodists believe necessary to salvation. My object has been to benefit the people, and not to make a party. I was aware that prejudice might prevent some from receiving the truth. I did not

think it proper to bring in, or dwell upon, those points of doctrine which are no way necessary to our salvation, but which might lead to endless and unprofitable disputations,' &c. But there was no small stir among the people. The old men, who were *rigid Calvinists*, were exceedingly mortified on finding that they had been hearing with satisfaction, and extolling, a Methodist preacher for twelve months. I think Ashur Smith was a good man, and doubtless he thought his course perfectly justifiable, as in that way he could preach the Gospel to those who would not have heard him if they had known him to be a Methodist. I believe he maintained a good character as a local preacher, and died a few years since, in or near Stanstead, in Canada. Mr. Smith was invited to preach a while in Athens, but he had made other arrangements; yet he told them he would get another preacher to visit them. The Rev. John Nichols was on the Wethersfield circuit to the north, and, by Mr. Smith's request, visited Athens in the autumn of 1800, and the people gladly received the word. His circuit had become so large, that his Presiding Elder sent young Martin Ruter to assist him, then in his sixteenth year. I had formed some acquaintance with Ruter a few months before, and was exceedingly pleased with him. His preaching in Athens had great effect, and a glorious revival commenced. This became so general, in the latter part of winter and spring, that it was judged best for Mr. Ruter to spend most of his time in this place. The Rev. John Brodhead was Presiding Elder on the district (he gave me my first license to preach, and was ever near my heart); he formed the society, and gave an account of the meeting to Bishop Asbury. A short extract from Mr. Brodhead's letter will give some idea of the state of things at that time: — 'Nothing remarkable happened,' he says, 'till we came to the little town of Athens. Here I preached on Tuesday to a large congregation in the open air. They heard with great attention. There had been no society formed, and it was proposed for me to preach again the next day, read the rules, and form a Class. We had a most melting time: the power of the Lord was present to heal, and eighty-three came forward, and joined society. Their eagerness alarmed me

before they had all joined. I was afraid they had not considered sufficiently what they were doing. I rose, and poured upon them a very warm exhortation, and told them we wanted none but such as were determined to save their souls, and would evidence it by walking according to the rules of the society. As soon as I ended, they came forward again with streaming eyes, and desired to join, till they made up the number of eighty-three.' This was a great day for Athens! What a change in one year! Now, praying souls were found in almost every house. Captain C—— and his wife, three sons and their wives, and six unmarried daughters, all put their hands to the plough that day, and other large families were almost wholly taken." Athens, with its joint appointment at Townsend, now reports nearly two hundred members.

In our sketch of William Anson, we have referred to his appointment and success as the pioneer of Methodism on *Grand Isle*, Vt. One of his successors* has recorded the following particulars respecting the church planted by him there. "It appears from the Minutes, that as early as 1788, a Methodist preacher, of the name of Samuel Wigton, was sent to a circuit called Lake Champlain; but there is no return of members. Two preachers were sent the following year; but still there were no returns. The Minutes are silent, in respect to this part of the country, from 1789 to 1798, when Joseph Mitchell and Abner Wood were appointed to Vergennes circuit, which stretched along nearly, or quite, the whole eastern shore of Lake Champlain, and extended into Canada. One hundred and eighty-five members of the church were returned at the end of the year. The year following, the northern part of this circuit was formed into another, called Essex, to which Lorenzo Dow was appointed. The southern part, bearing still the name of Vergennes, was travelled by Joseph Mitchell and Joseph Sawyer. This year, namely, 1799, Alexander McLane was sent to Plattsburg circuit, then first formed, which extended along the west shore of the lake. The Minutes give no account of members on Plattsburg circuit that year; but, in 1800, one hundred and

* Rev. Wm. Ballard.

seven members of society were returned. The entire ground around the lake was occupied, during the years 1800 and 1801; but no Methodist clergyman had, as yet, set foot on the islands. Anson was sent to them in 1802. With his new credentials as deacon, and in full connection with his companions in toil, consecrated to the service of his Divine Master, and with a heart burning with love to God and man, he mounted his steed, and directed his course towards his distant charge. After several days of toilsome travel, he arrived at the 'Bar,' on the eastern shore of the lake. He surveyed the Grand Isle, then directly before him, and but a mile or two distant. He was, at length, about to step upon his field of labor, but upon ground untrodden before by the Itinerant; — unattended by any colleague; with no one to introduce him; with no kind family that he had ever heard of to receive him; without a solitary acquaintance, or even a letter of introduction to open his way before him, — he was not without some misgivings. The bar could not then be forded, on account of high water, and a float or raft was the only ferry. On this he embarked, and proceeded for a distance: but a wind blew him back. He embarked the second time, with a like result. He made the matter a subject of prayer and reflection, and concluded to try once more, and, if he should not succeed in reaching the island, he would regard it as an indication that the Lord had not sent him. His third trial was successful. He introduced himself to the first person he met upon the island, as a minister of the Gospel, and inquired for a place to preach on the next day, the Sabbath, but could learn of none. On his inquiry for a tavern, he received for answer, that there was one about two miles distant; 'but,' added the informant, 'I believe they have no rum at present.' Rum, in those days, was essential to a tavern. He rode to the tavern, nothing troubled on account of the thing lacking, and put up for the night. Here he introduced himself as a minister, and asked for a place to preach on the following day. Permission for preaching in the tavern was granted, and notice of the expected service was sent around. Arrangements being made for the Sabbath, Mr. Anson retired to rest. At break of day, the following

morning, he was waked by the firing of cannon. He looked through his window and saw some men in the street with a field-piece, who had commenced the celebration of the Fourth of July, which occurred that year on the Sabbath. Surely, thought he, there must be some cause for the information he had received, that the people of these islands were *a savage race*, if they are more careful to celebrate Independence, when it occurs on the Sabbath, than they are to keep the Lord's Day. The fact that a Methodist preacher was on the island, and was going to preach, produced quite a sensation, and drew together a full congregation: and after Mr. Anson had delivered his message, the matter and manner of his preaching afforded the people abundant material for thought and conversation. He proceeded to organize his circuit, in doing which he scattered his appointments over the islands, and extended them into Canada. In prosecuting his work, Mr. Anson met with no small amount of difficulty. Though his congregations were fair, and there were enough to extend to him their generous hospitalities, the generality of the people received him coldly. Those that were religious belonged to other denominations, had their prejudices against the Methodists, and looked upon him with distrust, and some even with despite, regarding him as one of those 'that crept into houses,' &c. Mr. Anson was faithful in his labors, and was favored of the Lord. A revival prevailed, Classes were formed, and a permanent circuit was established. At the close of the year he returned one hundred and two church-members. Ever since the arrival of Anson, religion has been in a prosperous condition throughout the territory which he originally erected into a circuit. As was the case everywhere in the commencement of the labors of Methodist ministers, beginnings were small. There was much of prejudice, indifference, and opposition, from various sources, to contend against; but these things diminished, as the labors of the Itinerant continued. Revivals commenced and went on; and almost, if not quite every year, up to the present time (1850), souls have been converted to God. Only three first gave their names as probationers; but the leaven continued to work, and others were soon added. Anson

preached in barns, in private houses (mostly then log cabins), in school-houses, and sometimes in the grove; and so did his successors for many years. Sometimes the permission to preach in a given place was allowed but a short time, when a new place must be sought. The aged members relate many things of thrilling interest that occurred in these earlier times, particularly their large and spirit-stirring Quarterly Meetings. They were small in the outset, the first one being held in a private house, and the Love Feast made up of about half a dozen persons. But, in a few years, they presented a widely different appearance. They cannot now be, in every particular, what they were in those early times, inasmuch as the charges have become very much diminished and restricted in territory, and there are necessarily fewer to attend them. They seem to have possessed uncommon interest in these islands. Occurring but once a year, or once in two years, in a place, they never lost their novelty. All were eager to attend them. Every preparation was made to start at a seasonable hour, according to the distance, to arrive in time; and some would be on their way before the day appeared. The canoe and the 'small boat' were sometimes in requisition. They met; they exchanged their ardent greetings. They looked with veneration and love on the impressive, weather-worn features of the Presiding Elder, whom they saw on no other occasion. They listened with rapture to his message, as of special import to them. When the hymn was given out, they all sung that could sing, and there were few that *could not*. At the close of the fervent petitions of prayer, the hearty amen arose from scores of worshippers on their knees. When they were stationed for the night, sixty, seventy, — some say, even a hundred, — would sometimes be quartered in a single family. To the question, How many will *you* take? *as many as I have planks in my floors*, would sometimes be the generous reply. Their prayer-meetings, on these quarterly occasions, have been known to last the entire night. Their Love Feasts were Love Feasts indeed! When they had listened to the word on the Sabbath, and had celebrated the dying love of the Redeemer, they returned with renewed spiritual strength to their

homes. Not only did the people of God resort to these meetings, but thither those who were seeking religion repaired; and from every Quarterly Meeting more or less of such returned converted to God, while others went away awakened to seek and find him in times to come. Thirty-five different laborers have cultivated this field. Several of them have already laid down the cross to take the crown: though dead, they live, because their Saviour lives. Among the worthy individuals that have graced this circuit was Rev. Asel Landon. He early joined the church, and was soon called to act in an official capacity. In 1809 he was licensed to preach. In due time he took orders. He faithfully served the church twenty years in the local ministry, when God said to him, 'Come up higher.' In his death the church sustained a loss which, to this day, it hardly seems to have recovered from. Rev. Seymour Landon, son of the preceding, had his birth and education on this island. He is now a Presiding Elder in the New York East Conference. Rev. Thomas Marvin was, at first, prejudiced against the Methodists, and opposed them; but afterwards became connected with them, and a local preacher. He still lives, an ornament and a pillar in the church, and has two sons in the ministry. Others were raised up to the work of the ministry, and many of the leading members of the community became members of the church. From the steward's book it appears that the records were kept with a good degree of accuracy in the first years of the existence of the charge. It seems to have been the custom then, as it is now, with some Presiding Elders, to inquire into the religious state of the official members. The following record was made in 1805: — 'All the members examined, and mostly happy, and determined to serve God.' The next year it was recorded: 'The preachers and Class-leaders are mostly happy in God.' In 1807 the record of one of the Quarterly Conferences states, that the 'examination among the members composing the same found the moral character of all irreproachable.' An entry in the following year states, that, 'in examining the members, they were found determined, by grace, to live for God, and in general happy, many thirsting after holiness of heart.' Owing to so much crossing of water, the

travel on this circuit, in its original extent, was hard and difficult; doubtless more so than on any other charge in the Conference. It was also dangerous. No preacher, however, has yet lost his life; but one, like Paul of old, was once 'a night and a day in the deep,' and perhaps suffered more than did the great Apostle. This was Rev. H. B. Taylor. In connection with two other men, he was crossing the lake from the New York State side to the Isle Amotte, on a scow. A wind capsized the vessel. This was in December. A fall of snow prevented them from being seen; their cries could not be heard for the roaring of the waters; only the edge of the scow came out, and all they could do was to hold fast to the boat, with only their heads and hands out of the water, when the waves were not breaking over them; and they were in the middle of the lake, with no hope but in the almost imperceptible drifting of the scow. The capsizing took place about four o'clock in the afternoon, and the boat, by drifting, reached the shore about three o'clock the next morning. After being eleven hours in the water, they gained the land, in so chilled, frozen and exhausted a state, that they could not stand. By locking arms and bracing against each other, they managed to get to a house near by, and raised the inmates. Brother Taylor, at this time, was engaged in transporting lumber for a church that he was engaged in building. He had the privilege, too, of preaching faith to his two companions, who were irreligious, and who expected to perish."

Methodism has had much success among these islands, and the original appointment of Grand Isle is now divided into four districts and charges.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONFERENCES OF 1804.

Asbury. — New York Conference. — Asbury travelling in New England. — At New Haven. — General Lippett's. — Abraham Bemis' Homestead. — Lynn. — New England Conference at Buxton, Me. — Proceedings. — Sabbath Scenes. — Great Revival.

Asbury, having traversed the country to Tennessee in the west, and Georgia in the south, since the Ashgrove Conference, was on Saturday, ninth of June, 1804, again in New York city, on his northern tour. The preachers were assembling for the New York Conference, which was to begin on the next Tuesday. On Sunday, Asbury preached in the old John-street chapel, exhorting the brethren, both lay and clerical, to "hold fast the profession of their faith, without wavering." It was an appropriate time for such an admonition. The trials of Methodism were yet formidable; many of the preachers came to the Conference with the design of locating, and on the morrow he received intelligence that one of the most able men in the Itinerant ranks, Thomas Lyell, was about to retire into the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal church.

On Tuesday, the 12th, the New York Conference commenced its session in the metropolis.* We have scarcely any information respecting its proceedings. Asbury says, "It may suffice to say that our present Conference was a happy one, and a Conference of great business. We had sermons every day at noon. Fourteen deacons and eight elders were ordained; these last, at the Bowery church, where I preached upon 2 Tim. 4: 1—4. By hard labor I read off the stations on Saturday night, and our Conference sat on Monday. We proclaimed a fast, with prayer, for the Methodists, the health of the city, the general church,

*From Asbury's Journals, it would appear that the session began on Monday, the 11th; but they are full of inaccuracies.

and the continent. N. Snethen gave us a melting, nervous discourse, on the occasion."

On Wednesday, 20th, he was again reposing himself on the border of New England, at the home of the "Sherwoods," where he tarried two days. On Saturday, he reached New Haven, and preached the next day, "to a few souls," in "our small meeting-house." Thomas Branch and Sylvester Hutchinson were with him, and preached also during the day and evening. He lamented over the prevalence of religious indifference in New Haven, and recorded there an unusually emphatic expression of the official afflictions to which he was subject. "I have little leisure," he says, "to journalize. My soul has constant peace and joy, notwithstanding my labors, and trials, and reproach,—which I heed not, though it come, as it sometimes does, from the good, when they are not gratified in all their wishes. People unacquainted with the causes and motives of my conduct will always, more or less, judge of me improperly. Six months ago, a man could write to me in the most adulatory terms, to tell me of the unshaken confidence reposed in me by preachers and people: behold, his station is changed, and certain measures are pursued which do not comport with his views and feelings: then I am menaced with the downfall of Methodism; and my influence, character, and reputation, are all to find a grave in the ruins. First, my hill is made so strong that I shall never be moved; anon, oh man, thou hidest thy face and changest thy voice, and I must be troubled, forsooth! But I am just as secure as ever, as to what man can do or say. Should this journal ever see the light, those who read it, when I am gone, may, perhaps, wonder that ever I should have received such letters, or had such friends. Yes, gentle reader; both have been. Who, then, shall I believe; and who shall I trust? Why, who but a good, and true, and never-failing God?"

On Monday, he left New Haven for the eastward, accompanied by Sylvester Hutchinson, who was now his travelling companion. "We took the path," he says, "to Durham: here we stopped, as there was room for us in the inn to lodge. On Tuesday, we passed through Middletown, and found that our

brethren were about to purchase a lot on which to build a chapel on a small scale. We rode on to Hebron. I have made four hundred and twenty miles since I took my departure from Baltimore, May 26th. At Canterbury we lodged at Captain Lyons': the day's ride brought us through Windham and Scotland."

On Friday evening, 29th, he arrived at General Lippett's, in Cranston, Rhode Island, where, as usual, he was bountifully received. He continued there through Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday, Asbury delivered, in Lippett's chapel, an expository discourse on 1 John 1: 3—7. Hutchinson preached in the afternoon. It "was a glorious season," says Asbury. The next day they directed their course towards the rural retreat of Bemis, at Waltham, where they arrived on Tuesday, after a ride, during the day, of "nearly thirty miles, without food or rest, for man or beast." It was mid-summer, and all nature invited the weary Itinerants to repose. "On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, I rested, and read and wrote as my failing eyes would permit. My soul is in great peace."

On Saturday, 7th of July, they reached Lynn. "On the Sabbath day, I preached," says Asbury, "upon 1 John 3: 1, 2, 3. The state of the society in this town is more pleasing than formerly. Peter Jayne, brought up amongst them, is an acceptable preacher. A house is begun for the preachers to live in. Sylvester Hutchinson preached in the afternoon: I spoke also, and read letters giving an account of the work in the south. O! when shall we see such things in New England!" They urged their way on rapidly to Buxton, Maine, the seat of the New England Conference, where they arrived on Friday night, July 13th. The preachers had already assembled from their dispersed circuits, and were refreshing each other with public religious services.

On Saturday, the 14th of July, 1804, began the Buxton session of the New England Conference, an occasion still remembered by many old Methodists of Maine, for its remarkable spiritual interest. The roll contained the following names: George Pickering, Joshua Taylor, Thomas Lyell, Joshua Soule, Aaron Humphrey, Joseph Snelling, Comfort C. Smith, Daniel

Webb, Reuben Hubbard, Asa Heath, Epaphras Kibby, Peter Jayne, Alexander McLean, Joseph Baker, Samuel Hillman, and Joseph Shane. The last four were deacons, the others elders. Soule, Lyell, Webb, Smith, Kibby, and Shane, were absent. A number of probationers were present, whose names are not given. Asbury writes that on Saturday they "admitted and elected nine deacons and two elders." The latter were Samuel Hillman and Joseph Baker; the former, William Goodhue, David Bachelor, Philip Munger, Nehemiah Coye, Dan Perry, Allen H. Cobb, Daniel Ricker, Thomas Ravlin, and Alfred Metcalf.

During the day Peter Jayne preached. He was a young man of preëminent talents, and produced a deep impression. "It was a good season," notes the secretary of the Conference, "and some, we think, were converted."

Sunday was a day of great interest. A vast multitude had assembled, — some from distant towns, — and the crowd was too large for the chapel. A meeting for prayer and exhortation was held in the chapel at eight, A. M., after which the throng sought accommodation in a neighboring grove, where Asbury, at ten o'clock, began to preach to them on the *ascension*, and the commencement therefrom of the Apostolic Itinerancy. His text was Mark. 16 : 19, 20. In about forty minutes, the clouds gathered, and the assembly was compelled by the rain to retreat to the chapel. Pickering went into the pulpit, and preached on Christ, "the High Priest of our profession." Heb. 3 : 1. "A goodly number of souls," says the Journal, "were, we trust, converted this day." Asbury writes, "There were powerful exercises in the meeting-house, until near six o'clock : the Lord appeared — several souls were brought under distress. I trust the fruits of this day's labor will be seen in eternity."

Monday morning was spent in "the examination of characters." The ordination service having been postponed from the Sabbath, on account of the weather, was held at two o'clock, P. M. Asbury preached from a hay-cart in the grove, on Paul's exhortation to Timothy, 2 Tim. 2 : 1—7. He describes it as "an open time;" "the work of God broke forth," he says, "on the right and on the left." A great sensation spread among the

multitude, and before the session closed it was estimated that fifty persons were converted. Snelling says, "There was a greater display of Divine power at this Conference than any I ever attended. Many of the people were wrought upon in a very powerful manner; but, as is generally the case, there was some opposition. At one meeting, a man, appearing to be in a violent passion, came in, exclaiming, 'This is confusion; no good will result from this meeting.' He then called for his wife, bidding her leave the house immediately. She urged him to stay a little longer. 'No,' said he,—'let us go.' He then started to go out, and went as far as the door, when he paused a few moments, then turned back, fell upon his knees, and prayed for mercy as earnestly as any in the house. The assembly was so large it was deemed expedient to meet in a grove, the meeting-house not being large enough to contain the people. The preachers were placed in different directions in the grove, praying and exhorting. The people would gather round them in companies, similar to what are called praying circles at camp-meetings. In the circle which I was in, there were eleven persons who professed to be brought from darkness to light; besides many others who were inquiring what they must do to be saved."

The report of the Financial Committee is too imperfect to admit of any accurate estimate of the receipts of the preachers.* There were $383 towards meeting the deficit. The usual contribution from Baltimore Conference is acknowledged. It amounted to more than a hundred dollars.

On Tuesday the business of the session was hastened to a conclusion. Asbury read the appointments; an evening service was held for the public, which was attended with powerful effect, and early the next morning the preachers were on horseback for their distant posts. They had been refreshed by their mutual counsels, but above all by the marvellous outpouring of the Holy Spirit which had fallen upon the village during the session, and they went forth renewedly imbued with power from on high, for their self-sacrificing work.

* The page assigned for it in the records is left blank.

Asbury, accompanied by Hutchinson, was *en route* in haste, as usual, and reached Effingham, N. H., by night. They continued on their course rapidly, sometimes passing over forty or forty-five miles a day, and on the 26th found rest at Rhinebeck, N. Y.

CHAPTER XXII.

APPOINTMENTS AND PREACHERS.

Ecclesiastical Arrangements for the Year. — Samuel Cochrane. — His Labors. — Character. — Death. — Zalmon Lyon. — His Death and Character. — Eben Smith. — Early Experience. — Labors and Death. — Lewis Bates. — Early Religious Impressions. — Labors in the Ministry. — Special Experience. — Character.

THE appointments for the year in New England were the following:

VERMONT DISTRICT. Joseph Crawford, *Presiding Elder. Magog*, Ebenezer Fairbank; *Danville*, Phineas Peck, Andrew Kernagan; *Barre*, Oliver Beale; *Vershire*, John Robertson, David Goodhue; *Barnard*, Paul Dustin, Moses Currier; *Wethersfield and Woodstock*, Luther Chamberlain; *Athens*, Asa Kent, James Young; *Whittingham*, John Pinkham.

NEW HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT. John Brodhead, *Presiding Elder. Lunenburg*, Joel Winch; *Landaff*, Thomas Skeel, William Stevens; *Bridgewater*, Caleb Dustin, Lewis Bates; *Hanover*, Elijah Hedding; *Grantham*, Elijah Willard, Dan Young.

NEW LONDON DISTRICT. Daniel Ostrander, *Presiding Elder. Rhode Island*, A. McLane, D. Burge, Clement Parker; *New London*, Abner Wood, Benjamin Hill; *Pomfret*, Thomas Branch, Noble W. Thomas; *Tolland*, John Gove; *Granville*, Joshua Crowell, Luman Andrus; *Middletown*, Ebenezer Washburn, Nathan Emery; *Litchfield*, Zalmon Lyon, Eben Smith; *Ashburnham*, Thomas Ravlin.

BOSTON DISTRICT. George Pickering, *Presiding Elder. Boston*, Epaphras Kibby; *Lynn*, Peter Jayne; *Marblehead*, Reuben Hubbard; *Nantucket*, Truman Bishop; *Provincetown*, Alfred Metcalf; *Sandwich*, Joseph Snelling; *Needham*, Nehemiah Coye, Joel Wicker; *Hawke*, David Bachelor, Samuel Thompson; *Salisbury*, Daniel Webb, Ebenezer Easty; *Bristol*,

Alexander McLane; *Providence*, Asa Pattie, D. Burge, C. Parker.

District of Maine. Joshua Soule, *Presiding Elder*. *Portland*, Joshua Taylor; *Falmouth*, Philip Munger. *Poland*, True Glidden; *Scarboro'*, Asa Heath; *Readfield*, Joseph Baker; *Bethel*, Allen H. Cobb; *Hallowell*, Aaron Humphrey, Dan Perry; *Norridgewock*, Daniel Ricker; *Penobscot*, William Goodhue; *Union River*, Thomas Perry; *Bristol*, Samuel Hillman; *Union*, David Stimson; *Bowdoinham*, Daniel Dudley.

To these should be added the following, which pertained to the New York Conference, viz.:

Ashgrove District. Daniel Brumley, *Presiding Elder*. *Adams*, Laban Clark; *Cambridge*, Elias Vanderlip and Phineas Cook; *Brandon*, Seth Crowell; *Vergennes*, James M. Smith; *Fletcher*, Samuel Draper, Gershom Pease; *Grand Isle*, Samuel Cochrane. Also, on the New York district, under the Presiding Eldership of William Thatcher, *Redding*, Peter Moriarty and Sylvester Foster.

The ecclesiastical arrangements for the year, in the Eastern States, comprehended, according to this outline, *six* districts and part of a seventh;* *fifty-two* circuits, and *eighty-one* preachers. There had been a gain, in the last year, of one district and four circuits, but a decrease of five preachers. While the increase of the districts indicates the growth of the church, by indicating the increase of its business, the variations in the number of the circuits is not always an equally sure evidence, as they were frequently merged in or detached from one another. The present instance, in which there was an increase of circuits with a decrease of preachers, is to be explained by the fact that fewer circuits than usual had two laborers.

Among the names of preachers who appeared for the first time this year, in the Eastern States, is that of Samuel Cochrane, a worthy veteran of the ministry. He was born in Halifax, Vt., August 31, 1778, and converted in his 22nd year. In 1802 he commenced his public career as an exhorter; he subse-

* We reckon the Ashgrove district as in the Eastern States, only two of its circuits being wholly within New York.

quently labored as a local preacher, and in the latter part of 1803 was called out by the Presiding Elder into the ministerial field, and sent to Fletcher circuit, Vt. At the New York Conference of the present year, he was received on probation, and appointed to Grand Isle circuit, Vt. He afterwards travelled successively Vergennes, Vt., and Litchfield, Ct., circuits. Following the example of other heroic men of his day, he volunteered as a missionary to Canada, and was appointed successively to the St. Lawrence and Quebec circuits. Returning to the States, he received, down to 1841, the following appointments: — Whittingham, Vt., Pittsfield, Mass., Pownal, Vt., New York city, Goshen, N. Y., Dutchess, N. Y. (three times), Suffolk, N. Y., Jamaica, N. Y., Redding, Ct., Hudson, N. Y., New Rochelle, N. Y. (twice), New York east circuit, Milan, N. Y. During thirty-eight years did this devoted ambassador of Christ perform effective duty, in the hard service of the Itinerancy. In 1841–2 he was placed on the supernumerary list. In 1843 he was transferred to the ranks of the superannuated preachers, where he remained till his death, which took place at Poughkeepsie, in the spring of 1845. His brethren of the New York Conference bear a good testimony for him. They say: "Brother Cochrane was truly a man of God. In labors he was abundant and successful. Many through his instrumentality were converted. Though firm, he was mild in the administration of discipline, and the blessing of the 'peace-maker' rested upon him. In all the domestic and social relations he was kind and affectionate, and as a pastor beloved by his people. Brother C. was literally worn-out in his Master's service, yet he might have lingered a while among us, had not his progress to the tomb been accelerated by several paralytic strokes. His death, though not unexpected, was sudden. Having left the dinner-table, and seated himself in an adjoining room, his wife heard a noise, and hastening to ascertain the cause, found him prostrate upon the floor. His hour had come — he spoke no more, but closed his eyes and expired. During his sickness his mind had been calm and peaceful." *

* Minutes of 1846.

ZALMON LYON was another example of the devotion and purity of character which marked our primitive ministry. He was born in Weston, Ct. Of his early life we know nothing. When he joined the Conference the present year, he was somewhat advanced in age; but he did faithful service fourteen years, in the effective ranks of our Itinerancy. In 1818 he was returned superannuated. He died on the 13th of August, 1839. After an absence of some time from the place of his residence, on a visit to his friends, he returned in ill health, expressing his gratitude and pleasure at being permitted to see again his neighbors and brethren, and declaring that he had come back to die among them. He requested that his remains might be placed by the side of his beloved wife, who had died some three years previously. "From this time," say his brethren, "without any particular disease, he gradually sank under the infirmities of age; but while the outward man was perishing, the inward man was renewed day by day; — his soul was calm and peaceful; — patience had its perfect work, and not a murmur escaped his lips." * He lived at "Sugar Loaf," N. Y., twenty years, and acquired, by the transparent purity of his character, an extraordinary local influence. He was the counsellor of the community in all questionable matters, the arbitrator of its litigations. "In fact, such was his influence among the people in his neighborhood, that his very presence would quell any disturbance that might arise in the streets, or in the house of public entertainment; and *no one* was found sufficiently hardy to give him a disrespectful word. Brother Lyon, in an eminent sense, might be styled a peacemaker. He had gained the affections of the people, who manifested their kind regard for him, not in word only, but also in deed and in truth. For a number of years they were in the habit of paying him an annual visit, at the same time contributing liberally to his support."

He was eminently practical and experimental in his preaching; and a man of such a life could preach with authority. His fellow-laborers regarded him with a warm affection and profound veneration. They conclude his obituary notice with this

* Minutes of 1839–40.

emphatic testimony: "As a Christian, he possessed a character unblemished; — saint and sinner had the utmost confidence in his integrity; — they both loved him; — and when, in a good old age, he gathered up his feet to go to his fathers, they both embalmed him with their tears. Hail, venerated saint! thy work is done, and thou hast gone to thy reward."

Eben Smith was born of devout parents, in Lenox, Mass., July 18, 1774. His early religious education resulted in its usual consequence, early conversion. He was but thirteen years old when he passed from death unto life; and so remarkable was the work of grace within him, that he knew his sins forgiven, though he was acquainted with no other person who avowed the same satisfactory experience. He maintained this lively evidence of Divine acceptance through two or three years; but not finding any church the doctrines of which concurred with his own, he imprudently continued alone, and lost much of his spiritual confidence and comfort. During ten years he "remained cold and comfortless." By marriage he became connected with the first Methodist with whom he enjoyed acquaintance, and was induced by her influence to attend the Methodist services in Great Barrington, Mass. A revival of religion prevailed there, at this time, under the labors of Allen Miller, a local preacher. Mr. Smith recovered his lost ground, and entered zealously into the religious interest which surrounded him. A Class was formed, of which he became a useful leader. He was afterwards successively licensed as an Exhorter and Local Preacher, and in 1803 was sent by Daniel Ostrander, then Presiding Elder of New London district, to Litchfield circuit, Ct. Having thus providentially entered upon the labors of the Itinerancy, he persevered to the end. He was received on trial, at the present date, by the New York Conference, and continued to labor effectively, for nearly thirty years, in New England and New York. He was several years a Presiding Elder, and a member of four sessions of the General Conference. During seven years he was on the supernumerary list, and the last four years he was reported among the superannuated. He is characterized as an ardent lover of Methodism, an attached friend, and as

guarded in his remarks about the absent. He began his labors in the perilous times of the church, and shared courageously its trials. "In all his privations, labors and sufferings, he never sought retirement from the arduous duties of our Itinerancy, but went on rejoicing in his God, and in the prosperity of his cause." *

In 1842 he was attacked by paralysis. "It pleased God to preserve him a while longer; but, during the winter of 1844, a complication of diseases developed themselves. Asthma and dropsy, combining with his already greatly debilitated condition, rendered it more than probable that he could not long survive. Under these accumulated afflictions he spent the last few months of his life; and though it was manifest to all that he was rapidly sinking, yet his sufferings were not extreme. God was merciful to him; not a murmur fell from his lips. He expected his end, and was fully prepared to meet it. Blessed with his reason, he took pleasure in conversing with his family on his approaching dissolution, and often expressed his 'anxiety to go.' While in hourly expectation of the event, he said to his son, he had always had a dread of the pains of death, however fully prepared to meet it; but now he could find no dread, no shrinking even of the flesh. And on the 18th of May, 1844, in the seventieth year of his age and the fortieth of his ministry, at his own residence, in Milton, Ulster county, N. Y., he departed this life in great peace of mind, in full confidence and hope of eternal life, through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Lewis Bates still survives, one of the few remnants of the ministry of the early day now under review. Hale in health, active in labors, ever cheerful in his piety, he is familiar and beloved throughout our borders. He was born in Cohasset, Mass., March 20, 1780, and is a descendant, in the seventh generation, of John Rogers, the martyr. He remained at Cohasset till twelve years old. "These twelve years," he writes,† "passed not without many solemn thoughts of eternity." On removing to Springfield, Vt., about his twelfth year, his religious impressions deepened, and induced him to pray much in secret.

* Minutes of 1843-4. † Letter to the author.

"The next year, when thirteen, in the month of April, on the holy Sabbath, while reading the Bible, the Spirit of God fell upon me, and pierced my heart to the centre, and laid open to my view the deep depravity of my nature and the self-righteousness of my attempts at reform, the holiness of God, the purity and claims of the law. Alarm, terror, despair, and dread surprise, swept through my aching heart. I dropped my book, and fled to a lonely hiding-place in the barn, and gave myself up to God through Jesus Christ, the sinner's only hope and help, in faith and prayer. After praying some time, in an instant, as sudden as the electric shock, God spoke my sins forgiven, swept my load of guilt away, and filled my new-born soul with peace and love. There being no living Christians, ministers, or churches, nor revivals of pure and undefiled religion, and nothing said or done about it within my acquaintance, I some time time after lost the overflowing enjoyment. But I still continued praying in secret, twice a day on week-days, and three times on the Sabbath; and so zealous was I that when I was going to take an early start for a day of amusement, I would pray twice at night, for fear I should forget it in the hurry of the next morning. Thus I continued in my simple and imperfect way, until 1800. God then converted a noted and learned infidel of my acquaintance, and called him to preach. A glorious reformation followed; my mind was solemnly arrested with stronger thoughts of my eternal state beyond the grave; and after a very sore conflict with the powers of darkness, God reclaimed me, and, pardoning all my back-slidings, restored my soul to his favor, and the glories of his salvation to me. I went on my way rejoicing, and in April, 1801, joined the M. E. church, with two others. Thus originated the Methodist society in Springfield, Vt. I still went on my heavenly way, happy in God, and expected to spend my days as a private member in the church; but it was not long before my mind was solemnly impressed by the Spirit of God to preach the Gospel, and after great inward conflicts, on the 5th of Dec., 1802, I left all for Christ and his Gospel. I preached on Athens circuit, with Henry Eames, six weeks, and a glorious time it was; God

poured out his Holy Spirit, and brought many souls into his kingdom. Henry Martin was one of the converts of this reformation; he became a 'revival' preacher, and died young, in Maine: also a young man by the name of Webster was converted at this time. He married a pious young lady; God blessed them with ten children; by the last account I had of them, I learned that they were all converted and in the church; three of the sons are in the ministry, and another is fitting for it. I afterwards travelled three weeks on Wethersfield circuit, with Bishop and Peck; we had good meetings. Then Bro. Peck and I went, by the direction of the Presiding Elder, John Brodhead, to the north part of Vermont and Canada. Here I stayed eight months, and labored with delight; many were brought to God through the exceeding riches of grace in Christ Jesus. Among those who were awakened was Francis Dane, who is now known in our ministry as 'Father Dane.' From this period Danville circuit, Vt., became a post of our regular work. At this time a youth by the name of Norris, who now is a preacher, was brought to God. In the fall of this year, 1803, I went on to Barnard circuit, with Asa Kent, and had good times; part of it was old and part of it was new ground. Here I labored five months, and then was placed on Wethersfield circuit, Vt., with Phineas Peck. He soon left, and I had Moses Currier with me the rest of the time. We had reformations, and some very signal displays of the power of God; many were struck down thereby, and converted or sanctified. In 1804 I joined the New York Conference, and was sent to Bridgewater circuit, N. H., with Caleb Dustin, John Brodhead being Presiding Elder. We commenced our work in faith, praying for one hundred souls. How many were converted I know not, but we had an addition to the church of one hundred and thirteen, and so extended our field of labor that we called to our aid Langdon, Sampson, and Otis, and returned to the next Conference two new circuits, Tuftonboro' and Pembroke, N. H. In 1805 I was stationed on Tuftonboro', with twenty-three members in society, in two Classes, eight in Sandwich and fifteen in Tuftonboro', fifteen miles apart. I commenced my work in the name of the Lord and in the faith

of the Gospel. God poured out his spirit, and revived his work in great power and glory; the holy flame spread; the work of conviction, conversion and sanctification, extended. I had, during the year, to help me, Bros. Goodhue, Johnson, Bannister, and Stearns. This year I adopted the plan of calling mourners to the altar, at the suggestion of Hannah Harrington, a woman of great faith, powers, holiness, and usefulness. One week I preached every day in different places, and some were struck down with the power of God at every meeting. On a Sabbath at Maj. Ethridge's, in Sandwich, thirteen thus fell; on Tuesday, at Holderness, nine. This was a great year; we added to the church one hundred and fifty members, and made one new circuit, Sandwich, N. H. 1806, I attended the New England Conference at Canaan, N. H. The territory I labored in was set off from New York Conference, to that of New England. I was ordained Deacon by Bishop Asbury, and stationed on Tuftonboro' circuit. Bro. Bannister was my colleague. We entered the field in faith and good courage, and the work of God spread."

In 1807, he was respectively at Scarboro' and Livermore circuits, Me., where he was successful. "In 1808," he continues, "our Conference sat at New London, Ct. God was with us; it was emphatically a revival Conference. In the midst of the glory present, I was ordained Elder in the church of God. Pickering made the closing prayer, and while asking for the Holy Spirit to rest upon the new-made Elders, I felt a fresh baptism of the Pentecostal unction. My heart was inflamed for new battles and victories in the Gospel field. I was stationed on Tuftonboro' circuit, N. H., E. Hedding Presiding Elder. Bro. E. F. Newhall was my co-laborer. We went to our work in the spirit of our Master, in the midst of a good revival, with a great opening for the further spread of the Gospel. God continued the work; souls were converted, scores were baptized and admitted into the church, and our borders were enlarged."

He labored successively on Pembroke, N. H., Barnard, Vt., and Salisbury, Mass. From 1813 to 1817 he was located, on account of the domestic affairs of his father. During this time he travelled and preached considerably, for the spirit of Itiner-

ancy lived within him; and several "stations" have grown up where he helped to plant the truth. In 1817 he was reädmitted into the Conference, and stationed on Vershire circuit, Vt. In 1818 and 1819, he writes: "My lot was cast on Landaff circuit, N. H. We moved on joyfully, serving God in the Gospel of his Son. In the fall my Presiding Elder, D. Kilbourn, being unwell, sent me to attend the Quarterly Meeting on Lunenburg circuit. On Saturday and Sunday the blessing of God was upon us. On Monday evening I preached in Guildhall court-house, Vt. The spirit of the Lord was in our midst; the people were moved. We lodged in the jailer's house; he and his wife, and two others, were brought to God. On Tuesday evening I preached in Lancaster court-house, N. H; the presence of God was manifested, and a gracious work commenced. Previous to this, two Methodist preachers had been persecuted and mobbed out of town. I made two more visits to this circuit, and preached from its south part up the Connecticut to Canada. The Lord made bare his holy arm; the excitement spread, and many were brought to God. Our camp-meeting was glorious; the grace of God was manifested in Orford, north part of Concord, now Lisbon, — in what was called the Pine Woods, in Haverhill, — in the salvation of men, high, low, rich, and poor. Two preachers sprung from this reformation, John Lovejoy and N. Aspinwall. One rich, swearing, brandy-drinking, giant sinner, that struck Bro. Willard while preaching, was converted, and made into a humble Methodist.* In 1820 I was stationed on New London circuit. I travelled, to Conference at Nantucket and back and in moving to my charge, seven hundred and fifty miles. This was a large field, with eight or ten hundred members, and many appointments; but we had a number of good local preachers to fill Sabbath appointments. God carried his work on; — we had good times. Our camp-meeting was powerful; one hundred found salvation at it. We made two circuits out of our work the next year, Hebron and Norwich. In 1821 I was stationed on the Norwich circuit. We had good times; the work of God prospered; we founded the first Class

* Mr. Willard still bears the honorable scar of this blow.

in Lyme, at the mouth of Connecticut river. In 1822 my charge was Warwick, R. I. God poured out his Spirit, and souls were saved. In 1823 I was on Barnstable circuit. God's grace was manifested in great power and glory, convicting, converting, and sanctifying the people; over four hundred converted, among the different sects. To God be all the praise." In 1824 he travelled Chatham circuit, Mass., and in 1825–26, Wellfleet and Truro. On the latter a revival began under the first sermon he preached, and continued through the two years. "We enjoyed," he says, "many displays of the pardoning and sanctifying grace of God; scores were brought to the Lord. We built a neat parsonage house in Wellfleet, and a good meeting-house in Truro. This closed my four years' ministerial labor on the good old Cape; one thousand souls were converted to God, and scores were perfected in love, during this time." During 1827 and 1828 he travelled Salem, N. H., circuit, and in 1829–30 had charge of Easton and Bridgewater, Mass. — "Two great years," he says; "the power of God was displayed in the salvation of many. We enlarged our borders, built two new meeting-houses, and had a large addition to the church." Thus, wherever this veteran has labored, has more or less good resulted. His own narrative of his course is too illustrative of both the man and his times to be marred by amendments. His subsequent appointments have been as follows: 1831, Bristol, R. I.; 1832, Mansfield, Mass.; 1833–4, Weymouth, Mass.; 1835, Saugus, Mass.; 1836–7, Pembroke, Mass.; 1838–9, Scituate, Mass.; 1840, North-west and West Bridgewater, of which he says: "A great year of salvation: in West Bridgewater we commenced a protracted meeting; it continued eight weeks; the revival commenced in the middle of the first week, and continued through the meeting, and onward, until two hundred were converted, and several were sanctified. This work of God laid a strong and deep foundation for future good." 1841, Taunton, Mass.; 1842, Nantucket, Mass., where a great revival prevailed; 1843, Falmouth, Mass.; 1844, Dartmouth, Mass.; 1845, Pembroke, Mass.; 1846–7, West Sandwich, Mass. "These last two years of toil," he writes, "were not in vain,

for we wound up with a glorious shaking of the dry bones; the spirit of God fell upon the people; many were awakened, converted, and sanctified, and the saints were quickened and comforted." In 1849, he was at Hull, Mass., and 1850, Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard, Mass. In 1851, he took a superannuated relation, and resided in Whittington village, in Taunton, Mass. "And here," he writes, "God is pouring out his spirit upon us, and reviving his work."

We need hardly add any remarks to this narrative. It is characteristic, and, without design, reveals the traits of the man, — his devotion, zeal, cheerful religious confidence, and living faith. "In the course of my labors and travels," he adds, "in the kingdom and the Gospel of God's dear Son, a large portion of the time breaking up new ground, I have worshipped God, with his people, in the populous sea-board towns and cities in the east, along the Atlantic coast, from the Kennebec, through the midland towns and country villages, to the banks of the Ohio, in the west; and from Philadelphia, in the sunny centre, to the log-cabins of Canada, in the snowy north. In this time I have had my trials, temptations, persecutions, hard fare, and hard work, in common with the pioneers of Methodism. Some years, when a single man, I have received but from sixteen to eighteen dollars; and after I had a family, fifty to sixty-five dollars. Some years it has cost me from twenty-five to one hundred and fifty dollars more than I received. When I united with the Methodists in 1801, I found on the Minutes 60,000 in the United States; now, 1,200,000 bear the name, and in this time hundreds of thousands have been transferred from earth to heaven, and many that have been converted amongst us have joined other churches. In my family union I have been blessed with ten children: four are in heaven, and six on the way; two of them are in the ministry. I have enjoyed many great manifestations of the power and grace of God, which either led me down into all the depths of a silent heaven, where I was filled with glory and with God, or carried me to Pisgah's sunny summit, and moved me to shout 'Glory to God in the highest!' and break out and sing,

'On Pisgah's cloudless height I stand,
And view, by faith, the promised land;
On Hope's strong pinions soar away,
In perfect Love's unclouded ray.' " *

"Father Bates," as he is affectionately called in the church, is now more than seventy years of age; but he maintains, unabated the zeal and cheerfulness of his most vigorous years. The grace of God has wrought mightily in and through him. There are, doubtless, cases in which the Holy Spirit specially reveals his sanctifying power in the soul, and seals it unto eternal redemption. The great Edwards records such an epoch in his own Christian experience, when, as he meditated in a forest, his mind passed through most remarkable exercises, which melted him into unutterable emotion and tears. Mr. Bates has long enjoyed the inward witness of his entire acceptance with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; but while at Pembroke, in the year 1845, he received a very unusual manifestation of the Spirit. "I received this year," he says, "in the lonely pine woods, near the line between Pembroke and Marshfield, a deep and strong renewal of the gracious sealing of the Holy Spirit to the day of eternal redemption."

In person he is stout, not tall, stooping slightly, with heavy eye-brows, a capacious head, a face the integuments and features of which are rounded, and expressive of the flow of happy religious feeling, which never seems to subside in his soul. His preaching abounds in anecdotes, and the consolatory truths of the Gospel. He has maintained, through his long career, a remarkably blameless life, and escaped the slightest unfavorable imputation. The time has not yet come for a full portraiture of his very interesting character.

*Letter to the author.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INCIDENTS AND RESULTS.

Results of the Buxton Conference. — Revivals in Maine. — Trials in Vermont. — A Ludicrous Example. — The "Tithingman." — Vermont and New Hampshire Districts. — Camp-meeting. — Remarkable Scenes. — Middletown Circuit. — Persecution. — Statistics.

THE impression produced by the Buxton Conference was most salutary and wide-spread. Joshua Taylor, who was this year at Portland, wrote to Asbury, in about three weeks after the session, as follows: — "The subjects of the great work which you witnessed lived chiefly at a distance from the place of our Conference; and of consequence, when they were to separate with the rising of the Conference, it was like pulling apart the fuel of a large fire. The heat abates upon the spot where it had been kindled; but I hope, in this instance, the several brands will be a means of kindling fires in various parts of the country. I have not ascertained the exact number who were converted in the time of the Conference; but from the best account that I could get, it appears that between forty and fifty professed to find peace with God, besides a number who were awakened. It was, I believe, the greatest time that we have ever seen in New England. Every day was interesting and powerful, as there were more or less awakened or converted every day. But, among all the days, Monday appears to have been the most conspicuous for the displays of Divine power; several who fell to the ground on that day, under the power of the word, appear now to be shining lights. I will mention one instance of which I did not know the circumstances fully till after your departure. Mr. Roberts, of Gorham, who had led a very wicked life, and from the distress which he had occasioned his father was called 'trial Roberts,' came from home on Monday morning, in a very high mood, as if he had been going to a

frolic. When the work began to be powerful, he opposed it; and having a sister in the crowd, he attempted to go in to bring her out. He had taken but a few steps before he fell to the earth, and began to cry for mercy. Others united in prayer for him, and before he left the place he found some comfort. He was, however, in great distress afterward; but was delivered in answer to prayer, while with two of his neighbors, in a field of corn; after which, he went round among his acquaintances and connections, confessing his former sins, and proclaiming what great things God had done for him. At this the people have been struck with astonishment (for all, I believe, acknowledge it to be the power of God in him), and some have been awakened through his means."

In December, 1804, Mr. Taylor again wrote to the bishop, giving the following information respecting several of the circuits in Maine: — "I am happy that it is in my power to cheer your hearts with good tidings from the east. The first Quarterly Meeting on Portland district, after your departure, was at Durham, in Bowdoinham circuit, which continued August 4th, 5th, and 6th; there was no opportunity to administer the sacrament, as is usual on the second day. In proportion to the number of people, it was thought to be more powerful than the Buxton Conference. About twenty, it was believed, at the lowest calculation, experienced the pardoning grace of God; and numbers went away deeply wounded. From this meeting the fire spread into different parts of the circuit, and the work has been gradually going on ever since. The next Saturday and Sabbath, we had Quarterly Meeting at Falmouth, and the Lord was present here also. A large number were awakened, and about six converted. Satan has since then taken some advantage of the society, by stirring up the seeds of discord, which, in a great measure, has proved fatal to the work. Had it not been for this, I believe Falmouth would have seen glorious times. The Lord was powerfully present at our three following Quarterly Meetings, at Poland, Bethel, and Readfield; and, blessed be his name! I hear that the work is still going on in different parts of the district. In the month of September our brethren held a

field-meeting in Readfield, which proved to be a glorious and happy time; there were thirteen preachers present, travelling and local. Brother Baker writes me in brief as follows: 'After the first sermon, there were exhortations and prayers till sinners began to fall and cry for mercy: and then we prayed for the mourners, as usual at such times; the exercise continued until between three and four o'clock the next morning, and then, after a few hours' cessation, it began again; thus we went on four days and nights successively, in which time between thirty and fifty were converted, and I presume a number were sanctified.' I have had several letters from Brother Baker since, and find that the work is prospering on the circuit. I will give you a few lines from Brother Cobb, on Bethel circuit: 'Within about ten weeks past, there have been about forty souls, or upwards, who have professed to find peace with God, chiefly in the town of Bethel. Of late the work is more powerful than ever. Last Sunday evening a week we met for a prayer-meeting, and it was a solemn time; scarcely any in the house but were either weeping for their sins, or rejoicing in God. The heavens were propitious to our cries, and the skies poured down righteousness upon us. Six or seven found peace with God. Thursday evening following, we met again, and two or three more were brought into liberty; and on the next Sabbath evening three or four more.' I believe, my dear sir, that the work was never so prosperous in this district as it is at the present time. Thus you see the fire which was kindled at the Buxton Conference, or, rather, before that period, is still burning. Those who experienced peace at the Conference I believe generally stand fast."

The Itinerants in Maine were generally successful, and at the end of the ecclesiastical year they returned twenty-four hundred members of the church; they had gained about three hundred since the last Conference, and added two circuits to their single district.

We have already and repeatedly noticed the peculiar trials of the primitive Methodists in Vermont. Every means, from perilous rencontres to petty artifices, were used to retard their

progress; and when it was found impossible not to tolerate them, it was, at least, determined not to respect them. Their opposers, failing to discourage them by menaces and mobs, often resorted to annoyances and ludicrous grievances, which might tend to render them a public jest. Asa Kent mentions numerous instances, characteristic of the times, and proof of the slight public respect which had yet been accorded to the feeble societies of Methodism. An important officer of the "standing order," in that day, was the "*Tithingman*," who, armed with a long rod, at once weapon and staff of office, presided over the Sabbath congregations, with full power to remind unwary hearers, by a thrust from his wand, of any undue disposition to sleep, or other indiscretion. "In the town of W——," says Mr. Kent, "the population was sparse; but they had the shell of a meeting-house, with rough boards for seats; and having no minister, the Methodists were invited to occupy it on the Sabbath. Their preachers gave general satisfaction, except that some of them spoke *too loud*. But there was a sore grievance, which called for a speedy remedy. The Methodists, in those days, were often heard to respond to the preacher, by an audible 'Amen,' and at other times to exclaim, 'Glory to God!' and this was so different from the 'still small voice,' that it was judged by some to be an *intolerable disorder*. While some were devising a remedy, one, more wise than his fellows, intimated that, if he should be appointed 'tithingman,' he would put a stop to such confusion. The next town-meeting appointed Mr. A. (for I shall so call him) to that office. He pledged his *oath* for his fidelity, and then requested the magistrate to give him definite instruction how to proceed. 'Why,' said the squire, 'it is your duty to keep the people still in time of religious worship.'—'But what if they will not be still?' inquired the young officer.—'Then have your staff, and rap them on the head.' This was satisfactory, and he prepared his staff, which was a badge of his power. These staves were sometimes six or seven feet in length, that the officer might reach the offender without leaving his place. As there were no pews in the meeting-house, the men sat together on one side, and the women on the

other. Sabbath came, and Mr. A. walked in, staff in hand, and took his seat in the midst of the brethren. This was an eventful hour. Like modern *office-seekers*, he had come 'pledged' to office, and was about to make his début under the scrutinizing eyes of his constituents. To add to his calamity, it was Quarterly Meeting, and the members were in the habit, in those days, of travelling a great distance on such occasions. Bostwick was the Presiding Elder, himself a host, when the God of Sabaoth was in his message; and, I think, Joseph Mitchell was the circuit preacher. When prayer was offered up, all the Methodists fell upon their knees (for this was formerly a universal custom); but our young officer stood up, with staff in hand, to suppress all disorder. A brother said 'Amen,' and was instantly rapped upon his head. Another and another said 'Amen,' and each felt the rap. There was a shower of salvation before the preacher closed his prayer, and some shouted 'Glory,' and others 'Amen,' but each, in his turn, felt the rap; and, to do his duty, Mr. A. sometimes reached as far as he could to the right, then to the left; for they were kneeling around him so closely that he could not move. He had as much as he could do to punish those within his reach, leaving those beyond to transgress with impunity. This exhibition was fine sport to a certain class of the congregation, while our members seemed to care nothing about it. But, during the preaching, our *lover of order* had new difficulties to contend with. When they had knelt, with their eyes closed, he stood, and wielded his authority with great adroitness; but now he is *seated* with them, and even his love of order is not sufficient to induce him to *stand* and rap the heads of the disorderly. But when a faithful officer cannot do *all* that he would, he will not readily yield the point until he has done what he could. Mr. A. fixed his eye upon Brother S. Carpenter, of Rowe, as one of the most *disorderly*, and contrived to bring him to a better mind. Brother C. was a man of an ardent spirit and a warm heart; and although he had crossed the line of 'the old Bay State,' he never dreamed that the Vermont statute prohibited shouting, and of course felt himself perfectly at home among his brethren. He sat upon the seat

before our officer, and about the length of his rod from him, the end of which he placed under his side; and whenever Brother C. shouted, he would give him a jerk under his short ribs. This could be done without exposing himself to the congregation generally. The power of God was present to quicken and sanctify his children, and great was their rejoicing. Brother C. was gazing at the preacher, the tears flowing from his eyes, and often gave vent to an overflowing heart by shouts of 'Glory,' while our *friend of order* gave him a faithful jerk for each transgression."

This ludicrous persecution continued some time, to the amusement of lookers-on, and the annoyance, doubtless, of the worshippers. But the latter, on comprehending it, took the most effectual means of rebuking it. They prayed directly in behalf of the "tithingman." The supplications of a Methodist prayer-meeting were perilous to the self-possession of gainsayers. The "tithingman" was foiled; he retreated from his office, the jests of his associates were turned upon him, and he appeared no more, with his staff of office, to compel the Methodists to keep the peace.

Notwithstanding the perils and mortifications which attended their labors in Vermont, the Itinerants pursued indomitably their course, and great revivals spread along their ministerial tours. Joseph Crawford and John Brodhead led on their bands of evangelists in New Hampshire and Vermont, with unyielding persistence and labors. Beale, Robertson, Crowell, Draper, Ryan, Hedding, Kent, Bates and their associates, were not the men to falter at difficulties. Their efforts were crowned with a large numerical increase. The returns of the two districts had amounted, at the preceding Conference, to 2529 members; they were now 2930. Besides these, there were nearly 1400 on circuits in Vermont and New Hampshire which pertained to the Ashgrove and Boston districts.

Other sections of the church were equally favored with the outpourings of the Spirit. William Thatcher commanded a powerful corps of preachers on the New York district, which extended into the centre of Connecticut. They held a camp-meet-

ing during the year. Thatcher wrote to Asbury the following account of it, from New Haven: — "Friday, the 14th of September, we, with six travelling preachers present, began our camp-meeting. The melting power of God began with the exercises, which so overwhelmed the preacher that he could scarcely give out the hymn. After the first sermon and exhortation, we were joined by Brother Snethen, and about fifty Yorkers, with tents and baggage. We had preaching again in the evening. There was not a breeze to disturb the candles, the three nights we were on the ground. Evening exercise continued till after midnight. Numbers, deprived of their strength, fell to the ground, — some awakened and some sanctified. Saturday, 15th, family prayer before six o'clock; general prayer-meeting at eight; preaching at ten, followed with prayer and exhortations; preaching again, &c., at two. This day, ten travelling preachers, and about two thousand five hundred people, were present; and, what was infinitely better, the mighty power of God was present to wound and to heal. Such a work of awakening, conversion, sanctification, and falling to the ground, by the power of God, my eyes, my heart, my soul, never witnessed. The exercises were regular and irregular; preaching was attempted in the evening, but in vain: the cries and shouts of the people drowned the preacher's voice. The exercises continued all night. On Sunday morning the people flocked from every direction; the computation of numbers, that day, was from seven to eight thousand. Prayer-meeting at eight; preaching half-past nine, by Nicholas Snethen, with mighty energy; two or three more sermons, and a number of prayers and exhortations, were delivered from the stand, and then a short intermission; after which the worship continued, in different groups, till Monday, nine o'clock, when the Sacrament was administered to numbers, who were overwhelmed with love Divine. Then preaching, with great clearness, freedom and power, by Freeborn Garrettson: a lively, pathetic exhortation by Peter Moriarty, and a crowning discourse by Nicholas Snethen, while tears of joy flowed down the animated faces of the saints, shouts of rapture filled the place, and convictions seemed to fasten on every auditor. After a very fervent prayer, and the accustomed benedic-

tion, the parting scene was truly affecting. The preachers first shook hands on the stand; then the people crowded up, by scores and by hundreds, their hands extended, their eyes glowing with tears, and their bosoms heaving with big emotion, took a most affectionate leave of each other, reluctantly struck their tents, and dispersed. Description sinks beneath the weight of facts. Such a scene I could not have conceived. The power increased during the whole meeting. Saints triumphing, penitents weeping, people falling, the voice of joy and sorrow mingling, prayer and praise filled the groves around. How many were awakened, converted and sanctified, at this meeting, could not be known by any of us. One man, who was intoxicated, and came into the assembly to make disturbance, was struck to the ground by an invisible power, and is since soundly converted, and has joined the church. A work of God has since spread into the neighborhood of the meeting. The Methodists carried the fire home to their respective neighborhoods and families. The different Love Feasts resounded with praises to God for camp-meetings; and, in short, the whole district is eminently benefited by it. A general spring is given to the cause of our blessed Saviour, in every circuit and station in the scope of my travels. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men!" There was unquestionably some extravagance mixed with these remarkable scenes; but the results of our early camp-meetings were generally very salutary, and many burning and shining lights in the church caught their first illumination amidst such excitements.

Ebenezer Washburn labored this year in Connecticut. He says: "At the Conference for 1804, I was appointed to Middletown circuit, Conn., to labor with Nathan Emery; and a sweeter, more loving companion in labor, has seldom fallen to the lot of any preacher to enjoy. He was pious, laborious, a good preacher, and a lover of Wesleyan Methodism in all its parts. The circuit was at that time on the New London district. The Rev. Daniel Ostrander was Presiding Elder. I moved my family into Ponsett society, in the town of Haddam. The circuit was large, and contained more appointments than

an average of one a day for the four weeks. Our Sabbath appointments were at Middletown, New Haven, Ponsett, and Columbia, now called Prospect. The only meeting-houses on the circuit were one at Ponsett and one at Columbia,—both of them in an unfinished state; and in New Haven the Methodists had bought a little old Sandemanian meeting-house, scarcely decent or convenient to meet in. Here our brethren met a number of years, and endured the rage of persecution. Their meetings were not disturbed by any violent outrage in the day-time; but it was hardly safe for them to hold an evening service. In Middletown, also, the little society met with great opposition. The spring before I went on to that circuit, they were holding a prayer-meeting in a school-house, when the rabble, after ringing bells, sounding tin horns, and pelting the house with stones, drew up a small cannon, and loaded it, with the design of discharging it in at the school-house door. Judge Hosmer was informed of what was going on, and repaired immediately to the spot; and by reading the law, and promising to put it into execution, scarcely prevailed on them to disperse. But these things by no means damped the zeal of the little band; it might be said of them, as of the people of God in Egypt, that 'the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.' I found in Middletown an interesting society, much engaged in religion. I have seldom found a more promising company of young people in any society. Brother Emery and I labored in great harmony of spirit, and met with but little opposition: and though we had no general revival, we had some fruits of our labor in different parts of the circuit."

The aggregate returns of the New England Conference were 8540; the increase of the year was 716. If we add to these the returns of New England circuits which belonged to the New York Conference, the aggregate membership in the Eastern States amounted to 10,852. Any estimates founded upon the returns of these circuits must unavoidably be quite inaccurate, as they extended often across the line, while others, bearing New York names, and whose returns we omit, reached far into New England. Our early circuits were continually undergoing

modifications of their limits, and their apparent increase or decrease of members often depended upon such changes. While the statistics of the New England Conference presented this year a gain of 716, such were the changes or declensions of the New England circuits of the New York Conference, that their returns, added to the former, reduce the aggregate gains to only 153. This reduction is, however, for the reasons just mentioned, more apparent than real.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR 1805–1806.

New York Conference. — Asbury again in New England. — His Travels. — New England Conference. — Characteristic Notes. — Financial Deficits. — Sunday. — Extraordinary Interest.

Asbury, accompanied by Whatcoat, arrived at Ashgrove, N. Y., on Tuesday, June 11th, 1805, and opened the New York Conference on the following day. He affords us the only information we have, respecting the business of the session. He says: "On Tuesday, the 18th, the Conference rose at noon. We had blessed harmony and order; and I never heard less murmuring about the stations, of which there were sixty-two upon the list, and two having no appointments because of debility. The committee of business, and the committee of addresses, were very attentive to the affairs brought before them, and their labors were highly approved. By allowing the usual provision for the married preachers and their wives (no supplies given for the children), the Conference was insolvent seventeen hundred dollars. There was about eight hundred dollars in money, and other things, given to, and given away by, the Conference. We had a Sacrament and Love Feast on the Sabbath, and I preached: the duty was performed by others, at other times, as usual; but there were no special marks of good done."

The next day after the adjournment, he commenced his route eastward, to attend the New England Conference at Lynn. On Tuesday, 25th, he was at Ellington, Ct. "I preached," he writes, "in the school-house, to a few men, women and children. I went home with Mr. Ostrander at the Square Ponds. I believe Methodism is as low here as true religion: yet there is hope that God will visit New England, as well as every part of the

continent, before long. At the Square Ponds meeting-house, I preached upon Rom. 8: 1, 2. It was an open season, — the best time I have had in New England; several felt. I hope it is a prelude to a revival here. I am resting, writing, and reading."

He rested three days, — an unusual delay, — but resumed his work on Saturday, the 29th, at a Quarterly Meeting at Tolland. "My subject," he says, "was Jude 20: 21; it was a gracious time. On the Sabbath we had Love Feast and Sacrament. I ordained Nathan Fox, and John Norris, and James Hyde, Deacons: these are some of the first fruits. Tolland revives; we had some living testimonies, and several souls are brought into the church. At ten o'clock we went into an orchard adjoining the chapel: I spoke on Heb. 8: 10, 11. Brother Washburn's text was, 'Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.' Many exhortations followed, and prayers, with power: there was a great cry, and the meeting held without intermission until night."

On Thursday, 4th of July, he was at Needham. "I preached," he says, "at N. Bogle's meeting-house, on John 8: 30, 31. We stopped, Friday night, at Waltham. On Saturday we reached Boston. O, heat and dust! I felt like Jonah without his gourd. Sabbath, 7th, I preached in our complete little meeting-house, well filled with hearers, from 1 Cor. 5: 7, 8. It was an open time, and gracious season. In the afternoon, Joseph Crawford spoke upon 1 Tim. 1: 15. The word of the Lord appeared to strike like sharp arrows. I feel as if Epaphras Kibby had been faithful in Boston. Monday, 8th, we took the turnpike for Lynn. I found Peter Jayne in the new house built for the accommodation of the stationed preacher. God is moving amongst the people here; they are prepared for the Conference."

On Thursday, July 12th, the session of the New England Conference began in Lynn, Mass. There were present forty-eight members, besides Asbury, among whom were many whose names are yet familiar in the church: George Pickering, Joshua Taylor, Daniel Ostrander, John Brodhead, Daniel Webb,

Epaphras Kibby, Joshua Soule, Elijah R. Sabin, Ebenezer Washburn, Elijah Hedding, Thomas Branch, Asa Kent, Philip Munger, Elijah Willard, &c. Only two committees were appointed, — one for correspondence or addresses, the other on finances.

The records of this session afford abundant evidence of the continued vigilance of the Conference over its members. The notices appended to the names which passed under review are remarkable for their brevity, but also for their explicit frankness. One candidate is pronounced "useful, firm, perhaps obstinate, contentious, well-meaning." Another is said to be "useful, but unguarded in some expressions;" he seems to have been somewhat in advance of his times, for there was "some objection on his denial of visions and spiritual influences by dreams," though he "averred his firm belief of the Scriptures in these respects." Another is said to be "unexceptionable, useful and devout;" another, "pious, unimproved, impatient of reproof, not acceptable," and is ordered to "desist from travelling." True Glidden is recorded to be "sick, — near to death, — happy." One is charged gravely for marrying indiscreetly, and "suspended one year from performing the functions of a deacon;" another is pronounced "weak in doctrine and discipline, but as a preacher useful, sincere, pious." Lewis Bates is said to be "plain, good, useful;" Zalmon Lyon, "pious, faithful, but of small improvement." D. Young, "pious, capable, rough, improving." Elijah Willard, "faithful, diligent." One is said to be "acceptable, useful, zealous, — perhaps indiscreetly so, — sincere, ingenious;" another, "pious, useful, weak."

Asbury says: "We had a full Conference. Preaching at five, at eleven, and at eight o'clock. — Sitting of Conference from half-past eight o'clock until eleven, in the forenoon, and from two until six o'clock, in the afternoon; we had great order and harmony, and strict discipline withal. Sixteen Deacons and eight Elders were ordained."

The financial committee reported alarming deficits. Ostrander's amounted to $40. Brodhead, who was no longer single, came short of his allowance by $91; Soule, by $107; Wash-

burn, $50; Hedding, $41; Bates, $45; Willard, $56. Dividends from the "Chartered Fund" and "Book Concern," together with other contributions, were distributed to the claimants, but in sums which hardly approximated their deficits. Ostrander received $4; Willard, $14; Heath, $19; Brodhead, $30; Soule, $35. The aggregate deficiency was about $2800. The whole amount of contributions to supply it, $373, leaving a deficit of $2427; a formidable amount, when compared with the very limited "allowance" of the claimants.

The Sabbath, as usual at our earlier Conferences, was a day of extraordinary interest. A vast multitude assembled from the surrounding regions. The public exercises were held in a grove belonging to Benjamin Johnson, the first Methodist of Lynn; "a beautiful sequestered spot," says Asbury, "though near the meeting-house." The bishop preached, with much effect, from 1 Thess. 2: 6–9, a passage which most appositely described the Methodist ministry: — "Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the Apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children; so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us," &c. He has recorded a bare outline of his discourse. — "1. The system of imparting the 'Gospel of God,' which is preaching Christ. 2. The doctrines, privileges, precepts, and power, of this 'Gospel.' 3. Apostolical purity of intention, disinterestedness, tempers, manners, labors, and travels. The affection of soul 'imparted,' — manifested, — in preaching and prayer, and bowels of mercies and sympathies."

A great sensation was produced by these services. "There were," says Asbury, "many exhortations and much prayer; many must have felt; some were converted: from this day forth, the work of God will prosper in Lynn, and its neighborhood."

Many old Methodists of the vicinity still recall that remarkable day. It is said that the multitudes bowed under the force of the word, like the forest before the tempest. Scores were awakened; many fell to the earth, overpowered by their emotions;

and the preachers were summoned late at night from their sleep, to console and counsel those who, with broken and contrite hearts, continued to call upon God for his pardoning grace.*

On Monday, "the labors of Conference and public religious exercises were continued," writes the bishop. "On Tuesday evening Conference rose in great peace. On Wednesday I gave them a sermon, and immediately set out to Waltham, twenty miles: — wind, heat, dust!"

By Saturday, the 20th, he reached Wilbraham, where he tarried with Abel Bliss, Esq., and on the Sabbath preached from 2 Tim. 4: 5–8, referring again to the peculiar trials of the Methodist Itinerancy. He notes the outlines of his sermon. "'Watch, in all things:' as a Christian; as a Christian minister or bishop. Endure afflictions of mind and body, as a Christian and a minister; endure heat, cold, hunger, thirst, labor, persecution, temptations. 'Do the work of an evangelist:' spread the Gospel where it is not; support it where it is. Paul knew he was going by martyrdom: he had 'fought a good fight of faith;' and by faith he had 'kept' justifying 'faith,' which some had *made shipwreck of:* the 'crown' of justifying, and sanctifying, and practical righteousness, was waiting to encircle his triumphant brows, — a 'crown' thrice radiant with the three degrees of glory. In conclusion, I said many things, and with great plainness; urging the necessity of being civilized, moralized, and spiritualized, by the Gospel, in the plenitude of its Divine operation. I ordained Luman Andrus an Elder, and Urijah Clough to Deacon's orders. After two hours' serious labor, I retired."

He passed on rapidly to New Rochelle, where he "lodged under the hospitable roof of the widow Sherwood." He had travelled two hundred and thirty miles in six days. "I am still," he writes, "bent on great designs for God, for Christ, for souls." Pursuing, with unslacking energies, these "great designs," he again passes from our view, on his route westward as far as Tennessee, and southward as far as Georgia.

*See sketch of Bishop Hedding, in Mem. of Int. of Methodism.

CHAPTER XXV.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

Appointments. — Ecclesiastical Arrangements. — Reuben Harris. — His Travels. — Character. — Henry Martin. — His Labors. — Death. — Character. — Benjamin Bishop. — Lancaster, N. H. — A Brand plucked from the Burning.

THE New England appointments, for the Conference year 1805–1806, were as follows:

BOSTON DISTRICT. George Pickering, *Presiding Elder*. *Boston*, Peter Jayne, Reuben Hubbard; *Lynn*, Daniel Webb; *Marblehead and Ipswich*, David Bachelor; *Salisbury and Kingston*, Alexander McLane; *Salem and Hawke*, Alfred Metcalf; *Poplin and Pembroke*, Nathan Fox; *Nantucket*, Truman Bishop; *Provincetown*, Philip Munger; *Sandwich*, Moses Currier; *Rhode Island*, *Bristol*, *Somerset*, *and Norton*, Joseph Snelling, Nehemiah Coye, Ebenezer Easty; *Providence*, Epaphras Kibby; *Needham*, Clement Parker, Erastus Otis.

MAINE DISTRICT. Joshua Soule, *Presiding Elder*. *Portland*, Joshua Taylor; *Falmouth*, David Stimson; *Poland*, Daniel Dudley; *Scarboro'*, Asa Heath; *Readfield*, Aaron Humphrey, William Goodhue, John Williamson; *Bethel*, Dan Perry; *Hallowell*, Thomas Perry; *Norridgewock*, Joseph Farrar; *Penobscot*, Levi Walker; *Union River*, Joseph Baker; *Bowdoinham*, Allen H. Cobb; *Union*, Samuel Hillman, Pliny Brett; *Bristol*, Daniel Ricker; *Livermore*, Samuel Thompson.

NEW LONDON DISTRICT. Daniel Ostrander, *Presiding Elder*. *New London*, Nathan Emery, Thomas Branch; *Pomfret*, Joshua Crowell, Thomas Ravlin; *Tolland*, Noble W. Thomas, Benjamin Hill; *Granville*, Eben Smith; *Litchfield*, Zalmon Lyon; *Middletown*, Ebenezer Washburn, Luman Andrus; *Ashburnham*, W. Stevens, John Tinkham. Joseph Crawford travels with Bishop Asbury this year.

VERMONT DISTRICT. Elijah R. Sabin, *Presiding Elder. Magog*, Joseph Fairbank; *Danville*, James Young, Luther Chamberlain; *Barre*, Elijah Hedding, Dan Young; *Vershire*, Oliver Beale; *Barnard*, Thomas Skeel, David Carr; *Wethersfield and Woodstock*, John Gove, Paul Dustin; *Athens*, Elijah Willard, Hollis Sampson; *Whittingham*, Ebenezer Fairbank, David Goodhue.

NEW HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT. John Brodhead, *Presiding Elder. Lunenburg*, Asa Kent; *Landaff*, Joel Winch; *Bridgewater*, Martin Ruter, Benjamin Bishop; *Hanover*, Dyer Burge; *Grantham*, Hezekiah Field, Henry Martin; *London*, Caleb Dustin; *Tuftenboro'*, Lewis Bates.

These were all appointments of the New England Conference. The following were included in the New York Conference, though situated within the Eastern States, viz.:

ASHGROVE DISTRICT, under the Presiding Eldership of Daniel Brumley. *Pittsfield*, William Anson, Richard Flint; *Cambridge*, Elijah Chichester, N. U. Tompkins; *Brandon*, Samuel Draper, Reuben Harris; *Vergennes*, Samuel Cochran; *Fletcher*, Samuel Howe, N. Gage, Dexter Bates; *Grand Isle*, Phineas Cook. On New York district, under the Presiding Eldership of William Thatcher, were *Redding*, Peter Moriarty and Samuel Merwin; *South Britain*, Nathan Felch.

The ecclesiastical arrangements for the year consisted of *six* districts and part of a seventh,* *fifty-six* circuits and stations, and *eighty-eight* preachers. There had been no increase of the districts during the last year, but a large extension of their respective fields; to the circuits there was an addition of *four*, and to the ministry *seven*.

The ministerial corps of the year was eminently effective. The Presiding Elders, who directed its operations, — Pickering, Soule, Ostrander, Sabin, Brodhead, and Brumley, — were tried and powerful men; and the evangelists whom they commanded, — Hedding, Kibby, Webb, Taylor, Branch, Washburn, Beale, Kent, Bates, and their associates, — were "mighty through God."

Among the Itinerants who entered the eastern field for the

* This estimate includes the Ashgrove district.

first time the present year was Reuben Harris. He was born in Canterbury, Windham County, Ct., in the year 1776. In the autumn of 1800, he was soundly converted to God, under the labors of the Methodist Itinerants who proclaimed the word in that region. He joined their communion, was licensed as a local preacher in about two years afterwards, and received as a probationer at the Ashgrove session of the New York Conference, in 1803. Ardent with the first love and heroism of his Christian and ministerial life, he offered himself immediately as a missionary to Canada, where he labored two years with Joseph Sawyer, Peter Vannest, Nathan Bangs, and other evangelical pioneers of that country. The present year he returned to the States, was ordained by Asbury, and sent to Brandon circuit, Vt., and in 1807 to Middletown circuit, Ct. His travels continued to be indefatigable in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New York, down to the year 1823, when he retired to the supernumerary ranks. In 1829 he resumed active service, and continued to travel till 1834, when he was again placed upon the supernumerary list. In 1839 he was returned superannuated, and, removing with his family to Chardon, Ohio, served the church as his remaining strength allowed. He was a decided Christian, and a staunch Methodist. "He not only united with the Methodist people as the people of his choice, but he studied and became firmly attached to the entire system of Methodism, in its doctrines, discipline, usages, and government; from which he never swerved to the day of his death."* His brethren say of him, that, "though of a peculiar mental constitution, he was uniformly pious, a man of great patience and perseverance in labor; the Bible was to him the book of books. He was sound in doctrine, and a useful minister of the New Testament. He labored long and suffered much in the cause of his Master; and has gone, we trust, to receive a crown of life from the Lord, the righteous Judge."

When nearly seventy years of age, he desired to meet his old fellow-laborers once more in their annual Conference, and started to spend the winter in the south for his health, and to return by

* Min. of 1843-44.

New York city, where the Conference was to hold its session; but, on reaching Lancaster, Ohio, he was attacked, after preaching, with severe sickness, and on Feb. 15th, 1844, died "in peace and full assurance of hope."

HENRY MARTIN "walked with God;" and though he died young, he left a sweet memory in the spheres of his brief ministerial labors. We know nothing of his early life, save that he was a native of New Hampshire, and joined the New England Conference, on probation, the present year. He was appointed, successively, to Grantham circuit, N. H., Poplin and Landon, N. H., Bradford and Hallowell, Me. His young spirit glowed with missionary zeal, and he left the last-mentioned appointment, with the consent of his Presiding Elder, to form a new circuit between the Kennebec river and Boothbay. The attempt was hardly made, however, before he fell. He preached but one sermon after his arrival, when he was attacked with bilious disease, which baffled all remedies. After suffering severely, but with great fortitude and serene patience, he expired on the 6th of December, 1808, at Parker's Island, Georgetown, "with songs of praise upon his quivering lips."*

His short career was a consecrated one. He was distinguished for his familiarity with the Holy Scriptures, his clear understanding and sound judgment. His knowledge of the theory of religion was pronounced great for one so young; yet the favorite subjects of his ministry were those of experimental and practical piety. "He appeared as out of his most delightful employment when he was not conversing upon the things of the kingdom of heaven, either for his own improvement or the advantage of others, or speaking to God in prayer and praise. He was always ready to receive instruction, and especially such as tended to explain the mystery of the Gospel. He was diligent, laborious and persevering, both in his private and public duties, and particularly in visiting from house to house."

BENJAMIN BISHOP was "a brand plucked from the burning." We have repeatedly alluded to the attacks of the mob on the first Methodist preachers who visited Lancaster, N. H. It was by the

* Minutes of 1800.

conversion of Mr. Bishop and his wife that the way was at last providentially opened for the establishment of Methodism in that town. When Joseph Crawford heard of the expulsion of John Langdon and Rosebrook Crawford from the village, he went thither himself, took the field in defiance of the mob, and preached. The wife of Benjamin Bishop was awakened under the first sermon; her emotions were so great as to overpower her physical strength. Her husband procured immediately a physician and nurse, and her new symptoms were medically treated some time. But her agitation increased. The neighbors were very much interested, as she was highly esteemed among them. But neither friendly sympathy nor medical skill availed anything, for the arrows of the Almighty had sunk deep into her soul. "Some days after, as she was pleading for mercy, the Lord set her soul at liberty, and she shouted his praise with the voice of triumph. Her nurse was startled, at first, but soon exclaimed, 'Why, Mrs. Bishop, now I know what has ailed you all this time! You have been under conviction! I never thought of such a thing.' The Lord healed both soul and body; and such were the overflowings of her grateful heart, she was ready to say, with one of old, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.' This singular sickness and strange cure induced numbers to call and satisfy themselves, and she rejoiced to tell them of redeeming grace and dying love."* In those days intoxicating drinks were generally used in New England. Mr. Bishop, who was the village blacksmith, had unhappily become addicted to them. The habit seemed inexorable. His wife exhorted and entreated him to abandon the ruinous indulgence, by seeking religion. He hesitated, believing that ardent spirits had become essential to his very existence, and that, if he professed religion, they would lead him only to disgrace it. "At the Lynn Conference, in 1800," says our authority, "Elijah R. Sabin was appointed to Landaff, which, at that time, was included in the New York Conference. He told me that he made considerable inquiry before he could find any one to give him information

* Letter of Rev. Asa Kent.

in what part of the world he should find his field of labor. There was no circuit; but a small Class had been formed in Landaff. From this he sallied forth in search of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. On visiting Lancaster, he found Mr. Bishop serious and friendly, and his wife full of consolation and good hope. They hailed him as a messenger of salvation; and she called together a little company of her neighbors, that she had been instructing and encouraging to seek the Lord as well as she could, and who were ready to join heart and hand with her. This was exceedingly refreshing to Mr. Sabin, and he felt something like one of old, who said, 'Being in the way, the Lord brought me to the house of my Master's brethren.' This good woman engaged Mr. S. to use his best endeavors to convince Mr. B. that, if he should obtain religion, he would gain a victory over his appetite. He resolved again and again; and after he had been several times 'slain with that same unhappy dart,' and yet encouraged by her kindness and prayers, he cast himself upon the mercy of God in Christ, and found peace to his soul. He felt such strength and power that he considered his old enemy conquered. Some weeks after, he was warned to a military training, and drilled all day. Before they were dismissed, the pails of toddy were brought round, according to the custom of those days. Being fatigued, and having some distance to walk, he thought he would take a little: he did so, and set off home. Poor man! his head was giddy, his joints weak; but he arrived safely, with much difficulty. His good wife saw his condition, and was almost overwhelmed, but knew not what to say. He saw her agitation with deep mortification, and spoke to this effect: — 'You see how it is; and I told you it would be so. I only drank a little, and could hardly get home.' — 'Well,' said she, 'if that is the case, then it is best not to take one drop.' Here she taught the doctrine of total abstinence as the only safety for an inebriate. He thought, upon that plan, he might lose his life; but both agreed that it would be more acceptable in the sight of God for him even to die for the want of rum, than for him to drink it and be intoxicated. He made the solemn vow to drink no more, and, upon

their knees, she called on God to record it, and give him strength and firmness to keep it. After a while his appetite failed, with weakness and trembling. When he could work no more, he took to his house, and finally to his bed. A customer called to convince him that it was not a *sin* for him to get drunk, no more than it was for other men to take an *emetic;* — his nature required it, and he could not live without it, as this appeared to be the only thing that would cleanse and give a proper tone to his stomach; — his work was greatly wanted, — his duty to his family, and as a citizen, required it, &c. He replied, 'I am resolved to serve God; and I cannot, if I drink rum. I would rather die than live a drunkard.' — 'That is right, my dear husband,' said his weeping wife; 'hold fast your resolution, and God will give you the victory;' at the same time putting some gruel to his white and quivering lips, — the only nourishment he could take. It seemed to others that the hand of death was upon him; but her faith failed not. Soon there was a change for the better, and, by degrees, he was able to take nourishment, and finally went to his work, another man, — yes, a free man, — every feeling of soul and body detesting the very thought of strong drink! For a number of years their house was a preaching place, and a home for the weary Itinerant; — yes, it was such a place as the preacher knows how to appreciate who is travelling a circuit of some two or three hundred miles. Mrs. B. was one of the most powerful female exhorters I ever heard. There was a chastened modesty in her manner, with a pleasant voice and affectionate address, by which she found access to the hearts of stubborn gainsayers."

Thus was the strong foe defeated and the captive set free. Mr. Bishop became a devout Christian. After laboring for the church in his own neighborhood, he was, at last, called out into the Itinerant field. "In 1805," writes Mr. Kent, "he joined the New England Conference; and, up to that time, he told me that the thought of strong drink was revolting, and the smell of it produced nausea. After travelling a while, he located, and I have within a few years seen a notice of his dying in the Lord. Thus the Lord opened a door in that place for the preaching of

his word, and no man was able to shut it. And now, after fifty years, we may say, What hath the Lord wrought? I can only say of my brethren there, that I am informed that it is one of the most pleasant stations in that section of country. Blessed as they are with prosperity and peace, they may gain something by looking back to those times which tried men's souls, and, contrasting those days with the present, raise a higher note of praise to God for their gracious enlargement."

CHAPTER XXVI.

INCIDENTS AND RESULTS.

Camp-meeting at Norton. — Lorenzo Dow. — New Hampshire. — Vermont. — Ebenezer F. Newhall. — Anecdotes. — New London Circuit. — Trials. — Old Quarterly Meetings. — Statistics.

DURING the present ecclesiastical year, the third camp-meeting in New England was held on the estate of Mr. Newcomb, of Norton, Mass., where Zadoc Priest, the first Methodist preacher who fell at his post in the Eastern States, slept in his solitary grave, within the sound of the voices of his fellow-laborers.* This town was on the Boston district, and Pickering, the Elder of that district, was there, with eleven of his preachers, to conduct the services. Several local preachers came to their help. Snelling says: "There were many preachers present, and among them was Lorenzo Dow. It being something new, a great number of people attended. The preaching was spiritual and powerful, and we had much reason to believe that much good resulted from the meeting."

Dow, — still incorrigibly eccentric, presenting a strange mixture of humor and pathos, but profoundly earnest and devout, — after wandering over the continent, preaching by day and by night, came to this meeting, at the request of Pickering, who appreciated his intrinsic character. His incoherent Journals give us a glimpse of the occasion, as well as of his own heart. Under date of June 4th, 1805, he says: "About seven, A. M., I left my dear father, I know not but for the last time, and with my sister Mirza rode to the burying-ground, where my dear

* For an account of this noble evangelist, see "Sketches from the Study of a Superannuated Itinerant," and "Memorials of Int. of Methodism," &c. He was buried on the estate of Mr. Newcomb.

mother was interred, for the first time of my seeing the grave. I could not mourn, but was comforted with the prospect of meeting again. I departed to Windham, and preached under the trees; and tarried in Coventry, Rhode Island, that night, riding fifty miles without food, through want of money, to Providence, and pawned a book by the way to get through a toll-gate. I held several meetings in Providence; then rode to Norton, where Zadoc Priest died at old Father Newcomb's, whose wife had then no religion, but since professes to be converted, and is in the society."

He was of some use in managing the rabble, as well as in preaching. Of the effect of the meeting he says: "The Lord was wonderfully present with his Spirit, to acknowledge the meeting; for whilst Pickering was preaching, numbers fell, as if the powers of unbelief gave way; the cry became so general that he was constrained to give over, but the work continued. The full result of this meeting will not be known until *eternity.*"

Dow afterwards accompanied Pickering to Boston, Waltham, and other parts of the district. At Waltham, even his rude spirit was charmed with the rural tranquillity, which surrounded the hospitable home of Bemis, and the Christian charities which dwelt within its domestic circle, then comprising four generations. He preached there with effect. "I preached," he says, "on Saturday and Sunday, and called up those who would wish me to remember them, and strive to remember themselves in prayer, to give their hands; and the power of God seemed to come over all."

After preaching along the district northward, to Canada, he again left the Eastern States, on his errant course over the continent and to England.

Brodhead guided the labors of a devoted band of Itinerants this year, on the New Hampshire district. Ruter, Kent, Bishop, Martin and Bates, spread the truth with unswerving energy over their long ministerial tours, and by the end of the year increased their circuits from seven to ten.

On the Vermont district, Elijah R. Sabin and his fourteen evangelists labored incessantly and with good success, though

their numerical additions were not remarkable, for a great proportion of the converts of Methodism were still drawn into other churches. They added, however, one circuit to the district. During this year, Ebenezer F. Newhall, who still survives in a green old age, wandered on foot among the wildernesses and sparsely inhabited regions of northern Vermont and beyond the Canada line, visiting his kindred, and preaching Christ in the log cabins of the settlers. He was young, and not yet in the regular ministry; but the Divine call sounded in his soul, and in deep anxiety and loneliness he traversed the forests, "exhorting" in every house which he met on his route. His word was rendered a blessing to many, and some of his meetings in those then remote wilds will be remembered in heaven. He records striking evidences of the moral destitution of the country. "I called at many of the houses, and was much affected to see the destitution of the new settlers in those vast forests. From where I left the shore of Lake Champlain, I travelled, on foot and alone, through woods and across a wide ledge of rocks of two hours' travel, by marked trees that were difficult to find; and, if once lost, I might wander in the desert, with little hope of finding my way again. To secure myself, I resolved not to lose sight of one mark ahead and one in the rear, so that, if I could not go forward, I might find my way back. From this I learned a good lesson, viz., not to move toward Eternity without a clear evidence of being in the path that leads to Life! Often I rested my weary limbs by sitting down and reading my Bible, and kneeling in prayer. Soon I came to a small opening, — found a log hut, — stopped, — talked, read, sung and prayed with them; and then inquired if there was a house two or three miles ahead, where I could stop over night and hold a meeting, and was informed that there probably was. So on I went, calling on every family and praying with them; — all seemed glad to see me, and promised to follow on to the meeting. As I came to the third opening, I called at the first log hut, and found it inhabited by a very poor woman. I invited her to go to the meeting. She said, 'I have no clothes but these that I have on, and they are not suitable for such a place.' — I replied, 'Don't stop for

that; just wash you clean, and go: God may meet you there, and wash away all your sins, and clothe you with salvation.' — 'But I have no shoes,' she continued. — 'No matter; God may put on your feet the Gospel shoes.' — 'Then I have no bonnet.' — 'Well, God can put on your head a crown of life.' — 'Neither have I any cloak. — 'Dear woman,' said I, 'make no more excuses; throw a sheet over your shoulders, and if you find Jesus, as you may, you will not be sorry you went, even if you should go barefoot and ragged, since it is the best your poverty allows.' I then passed on to the next house; with cheerful looks they welcomed me to the hospitalities of their house, — sent notice of the meeting the other way, and thanked me for inviting the people as I came along. They soon assembled from several miles around, and the poor woman was among them, with rags sewed on her feet, a sheet doubled and flung over her head, and her children by her side. How easy it was to talk to a people hungry for the bread of life! My soul was happy, and praised God. In the morning I passed on through the woods, feeling that God was my support and comfort. I tarried a few weeks, — held some meetings. The Lord moved upon the hearts of the people, and many were brought to rejoice in God."

A venerable layman, from whom we have already quoted, and who retains the spirit as well as the memory of those early times,* furnishes us the following illustrations of the character of Methodism, as it then existed on the New London circuit: "This circuit was laid out on the old plan of cutting out as much work as could be done by two warm-hearted Itinerant preachers, giving them a route of two hundred and fifty miles' travel, with about twenty appointments and thirty-two sermons per month. One of the preachers told me that he and his colleague preached thirty-two sermons each in four weeks. There were four Sabbath appointments on the circuit, — New London, Middle Haddam, Norwich, and Windham or Canterbury. The smaller societies had no Sabbath preaching; but they could attend meeting on working days, without murmuring, and thought they were highly privileged. But our good Shepherd saw the wants of his little flock, and raised them up local preachers, viz., Daniel

* Mr. J. Stocking, of Glastenbury, Ct.

Burrows, Peter Griffin, Brs. Battey, Fillmore, Lathrop, and myself, — two shoemakers, two farmers, one saddler, one judge of probate, and a few others. This little band of laborers supplied the large societies with preaching once in two weeks, and preached to the small societies on the Sabbath; attended funerals, and visited the sick, in the absence of the travelling preacher. Some of them were ordained deacons in due time, and aided the preachers on the circuit in their labors of love, and great prosperity of the church was the result. The small societies became large, and the large ones larger, and in one year three hundred souls were added to the church. In those days the work of God went forward, and preachers were full of faith and the Holy Ghost; and the members of the church walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing, the progress of Methodism in Connecticut alarmed the sectarian, the infidel, and the immoral, and all means were used to stop its progress. School-houses were shut against us, our catechism was rejected, so that our children must either learn to say God fore-ordains whatsoever comes to pass, or stand by while their school-mates were drilled into Calvinism. But we had a remedy at hand, for we catechized our children at home. Sometimes Calvinists would attend our meetings, and when opportunity offered would rise and undertake to point out our errors, and would address their ideas to the congregation, with much apparent concern for the people. In such cases, if I was leading the meeting, I always used a scourge of small cords, which drove them out of the temple; and the same person seldom repeated his attack in the same way. The local preachers had to suffer their full share of persecution; but none of these things moved us. In those days there was much practical Methodism. The members were at the Class-room at the hour appointed; our families had their altars erected, where, morning and evening, prayer and praise were offered up through our great High Priest. The public meeting was well attended by our members, dressed in plain attire, and full of faith, looking for a blessing from God upon the word preached. Surely it was easy preaching to such nearers. The preacher, at the close of the services, announces a

Quarterly Meeting at such a time and place, and tells his brethren to be there, if possible; for sinners must be converted, and believers sanctified, and no doubt but we shall be much blessed of God. Be there on Saturday, by all means, if you want a good meeting. On the day appointed, many started for Quarterly Meeting, — some on horseback, some in wagons, some in carts, and others on foot, singing as they went. On their arrival, they are made welcome by the brethren and sisters, by a hearty shake of the hand, and, 'Is it well with thy soul?' The Saturday's exercise prepares for the Sabbath; shouts of victory are heard in the Love Feast, and the day passes away with much delight, and spiritual benefit. All have good tidings to carry home to those who could not attend. The inquiry is made, 'Did you have a good meeting?' — The answer is, 'Yes, glory to God! sinners were converted, and a number of believers experienced perfect love; and the next Quarterly Meeting will be held in Bro. H.'s barn.' — 'That is good news; we must live to God, and be ready for the time.' In the midst of those days of prosperity, we built a chapel in East Glastenbury, and another in Hebron, and one in Norwich, which was carried away by a flood, but was soon replaced by another." The style, as well as the facts, of this communication, indicate vividly the spirit of the times.

The aggregate returns, for the year, of the New England Conference, were 9211; its gains were 671. If we include the returns from New England circuits to the New York Conference, the aggregate amounts to 11,744, and the whole increase of the year to about 900. There were, at this time, but 66 colored Methodists in the Eastern States; their number had diminished.

It was a year of general prosperity to the denomination. Lee says: "The work of the Lord greatly prospered in most parts of our connection. The Methodists have increased more, of late years, in the United States, than formerly. We have more preachers, more circuits, more members, and (I may say) more religion, than we ever had at any one time before." * The reported increase of the entire church was more than 10,000.

*Short History, &c.

CHAPTER XXVII.

EARLY CHURCHES IN MAINE.

The First Methodist Church in Maine. — Lee at Monmouth. — Gillman Moody. — Daniel Smith. — The Second Chapel in Maine. — Vienna. — Its First Class. — Revivals. — Chapels. — Preachers. — Methodism in Portland. — Lee's Visits. — Major Ilsley. — Theophilus Boynton. — First Class. — Adversities. — Prosperity. — Bath. — Early Class. — Timothy Merritt. — Progress. — Methodism on the Penobscot. — On the Kennebec.

The first Methodist Class in Maine was formed at Monmouth, "about the first of November, 1794."* Lee had formed a circuit in the Province the preceding year, but it is not known that a single Methodist lived within its limits. Philip Wager was sent to travel the new circuit, and seems to have been successful, as Lee, on revisiting Maine in 1794, found much religious interest in several towns. He says: "12th November, I rode to Esquire Dearborn's, in Monmouth, and stayed all night; was greatly delighted in hearing of many precious souls that had been awakened, and several that had been converted, in the town, within a short time past. Surely, the Lord is saying to the north, Give up. Amen, even so: come, Lord Jesus!"

Wager met him here the next day. "I was," writes Lee, "greatly pleased with the account he gave me of the prospect of a work of God in several places on his circuit. At two o'clock I preached at Captain Hopkins' tavern, and the Lord moved upon the hearts of many of the people. Brother Wager exhorted with freedom. I met the Class, and was happy to hear from the people's own mouth what the Lord had done for their souls. There were about fifteen in Class, and most of them profess to be happy in God. This Class has been formed but a few weeks, and is the first ever formed in the Province of Maine. May they be as the little cloud, which at first was like a man's hand, but soon covered the heavens."

Gillman Moody and Daniel Smith (since well known as use-

*Lee's Short History. Anno 1794.

ful local preachers), with a few others, who formed this Class, have the honor of being the first Methodists in Maine. Mr. Moody had been converted in Brentwood, N. H., in 1776; but, being a decided Arminian, he found little sympathy from his Calvinistic brethren. He removed to Monmouth in 1762. When he first heard Jesse Lee, he exclaimed, as he went home, "I am satisfied he has preached the truth of the Bible; and if he is a Methodist, I am one." He and his wife were henceforth steadfast in their adherence to the infant cause of Methodism. Mr. Smith died in Strong, Me., Oct. 10th, 1845, aged seventy-eight years. A correspondent, who knew him well, says:* "Our venerable 'Father' Smith, with seven others, constituted the first Class of Methodists ever formed in this state. They have all preceded him, and now, in a good old age, he is called to his reward in the company not only of his early associates, but with the 'general assembly and church of the first-born.' Mr. Smith was the father of ten children; one is in heaven, nine on the way, and all, with one exception, are members of the church their father loved and honored. Two of them are local Elders in the Methodist Episcopal church. Thus, it is seen, he commanded his children after him in the ways of the Lord; especially was he strict to command the observance of the Holy Sabbath. Mr. Smith was useful as a local preacher for many years, and his ministry was not without its seals. Thirty-eight years ago, he was ordained Deacon by the sainted Asbury, and continued his labors as long as he was able. His children remembered him with fondest affection, and thank him, in his grave, for that discipline which, in their waywardness they sometimes thought too severe. He was a man of firmness and decision; and plainly did he show, in his long Christian pilgrimage, that he had counted the cost when he set out. Twenty-nine years he bowed around the family altar alone; but his prayers were answered, and his children were given him."

Several other members of this first Class lived to an advanced age, and proved through their lives the genuineness of their Christian experience.

*Rev. D. F. Quimby.

In about two months after its organization, Lee again visited Monmouth; he came in the power of the Highest. The old members of the church often in after years referred to the marvellous effect of his discourse. He speaks of it himself as follows: "At Captain Hopkins', in Monmouth, being Christmas day, I preached on Isa. 9 : 6. We had a remarkably large congregation, and a very remarkable season. The people seemed to swallow every word. Toward the end of the meeting, the power of God was mightily displayed; there were but few dry eyes in the house. I wept over my congregation, and had to stop for a season. I begged the poor sinners to be reconciled to God, till I was persuaded that some of them would obey the truth. P. Wager exhorted, with a good deal of life. We then administered the Lord's Supper to several persons. This is the first time the Methodists ever communed in this town. Then I gave the friends some advice about building a meeting-house in this place."

About the close of the year 1795, the society at Monmouth erected the second Methodist chapel in Maine, the first having been built at Readfield the same year. It was dedicated the last day of May, 1796. In 1838 it was thoroughly repaired, and continued, as from the beginning, to have none but free seats. On Dec. 16th, 1843, it was destroyed by fire; but was rebuilt, and now stands the monument of the first Methodist society in Maine. The germ planted by Lee and Wager has endured, through all adversity, down to our day, and the Monmouth society reported in 1850 about one hundred and fifty members.

Of the church in VIENNA a correspondent has furnished us the following sketch: "Jedediah Whittier, James Cochran, and John Thompson, constituted the first Class, in 1794. They were soon joined by Elisha Johnson and wife, Thomas Whittier and wife, Ruth Cochran, and Ruth Whittier. During the two years following, they regularly met on the Sabbath for reading Wesley's sermons and prayer, which resulted, at length, in some additions. About this time Daniel Morrell (who was for twenty-five years a useful Class-leader) and his wife joined the

praying band. With occasional additions, they struggled on, through evil report and good report, until they were strengthened in numbers by a revival in 1801, which commenced at a Quarterly Meeting held in the unfinished house of Jedediah Whittier; Joshua Taylor, Presiding Elder, Oliver Beale, and other preachers, were present. When this meeting was appointed, Moses Springer, of Gardiner, father of Rev. M. Springer, resolved on attending, then unacquainted with the Methodists, except by report. He had been, for some time, deeply concerned for his soul; and not regarding the distance, or badness of the roads, he proceeded on horse-back to the place. During the meeting the presence of God was manifest, and the little band were especially refreshed in commemorating the Saviour's sufferings and death. They arose from their knees, and all were about to depart, when Mr. Springer arose and said that he could not leave the place until he had told what God had done for his soul. While relating his experience, others were smitten with conviction, and subsequently were made to rejoice in deliverance from sin. In 1804 Joseph Baker was the pastor of the flock in Vienna. On the last day of this year, Jedediah Whittier and wife, and a pious female, having been of the opinion, for some time, that five young persons were convinced of sin, invited these five persons to spend the evening at Mr. W.'s house. While the faithless professor, like the heath in the desert, knows not when good cometh, these watchful souls, from the heights of Zion, saw these weary and heavy-laden ones; not a word had been uttered, but to their keener vision it was evident they were not far from the kingdom of God. The evening was spent in conversation and singing, until preparations were making to leave. No admission of religious feelings had been drawn from them, and great anxiety filled the minds of those who were seeking their souls for the Lord; but their sorrow was turned to joy by these words, uttered by one of the number, named Samuel Ireland: 'I cannot leave this house until I feel differently in my mind.' At the same time he fell upon his knees, and began to cry for mercy. The rest did the same, and before morning the five were full of joy in the God of their salvation. From this begin-

ning a glorious revival resulted. In 1811 a secession took place. Under the labors of Rev. B. Jones, in 1812, a great revival occurred. From this time, frequent revivals of less note were enjoyed, and almost every individual who removed to Vienna, or remained any length of time in the place, became converted, insomuch that the wicked would often remark that 'one must drive swiftly through V., or the Methodists would have him.' From a divided and lethargic state, they were revived; and enjoyed a great refreshing from the presence of God, in 1840, under the labors of Rev. R. C. Bailey, when about forty were added to the church. The blessed work extended to other towns. The first house of worship built by the society was erected in 1802, when there were but seven male members. The second edifice, a neat and commodious house, was dedicated in 1841. The ranks of the travelling ministry have received several efficient men from this circuit; viz., D. Dudley, True Glidden, Henry True, John W. Dow, George Pratt, and Charles W. Morse.* To the local ministry Vienna circuit has given J. Whittier, J. Merrill, J. Bradly, Jonathan Bradly, J. Cochran, J. Thompson, and A. C. Hodgkins." †

Lee visited PORTLAND in September, 1793. He took lodgings at a hotel. On its being rumored about the city that a Methodist preacher had arrived, Mr. Daniel Ilsley, a Protestant Episcopalian, and a gentleman of much respectability, called on him, and invited him to his house. Mr. (or, as he was usually called, Major) Ilsley was then an attendant at Mr. Kellogg's Congregational church, there being no pastor over the Episcopal church. He took a lively interest in obtaining a place for Lee's meetings, and having called on the parish committee, he obtained permission for him to lecture in Mr. Kellogg's meeting-house the same evening. Lee preached there again the next afternoon. Mr. Kellogg, having heard him, was so well pleased, that, being about to be absent several Sabbaths, he engaged Mr. Lee to supply his desk, which he accordingly did. On his return, some misunderstanding occurred; but it was subsequently

* Those only are mentioned who have been licensed there.
† Letter from Rev. F. A. Crafts.

repaired, and Mr. Kellogg became friendly to the Methodist society, and having retired from his pastoral relation, was for some time before his death a regular attendant at the Methodist church.

Mr. Lee, having been ejected from Mr. Kellogg's pulpit, commenced preaching in Theophilus Boynton's dwelling. Several persons were awakened, and Mr. Boynton was among the first to reap the benefit of the Itinerant's labors, by being brought to the knowledge of the truth. Soon after, his wife experienced religion, and they did much throughout their lives to sustain the infant cause; but they both had an early yet triumphant departure to the land of rest. The word took root in some hearts, and through the occasional labors of Lee, and other Methodist preachers who began to visit the city, a small Class of five members was formed in 1794. Philip Wager had the honor of organizing the first society in Portland. The names of its members were, Theophilus Boynton, Hannah Boynton, Susan Thrasher, Abigail Baker and Polly Atkins. The latter is the only one who still survives.

The first words spoken in the first Class-meeting, in answer to the usual question, were characteristic: "*I know in whom I have believed.*" It was well they did know, for bitter was their persecution; they were accounted fanatics, and hooted at in the streets. So much opposition, reproach and scorn, were encountered by them, that few had the courage to join the Class for a long time after it was formed.

Soon after Lee came to Portland, preaching appointments were made in towns adjacent, and a circuit was formed, called Portland circuit. Joel Ketchem, Philip Wager, Stephen and Elias Hull, Joshua Hall and Enoch Mudge, travelled it in succession; but so unpropitious were the prospects in Portland, some of the Class having died and others withdrawn, that it was at length left out of the list of regular appointments, and the circuit was called by another name. At one time, the Class was diminished, by death and removals, to a single individual. God did not, however, allow it utterly to perish. James Lewis, a zealous and faithful local preacher, commenced visiting the city;

the travelling preachers renewed their efforts, and a school-house on India-street having been obtained for meetings, the prospects of Methodism once more revived. Several were converted, and a few Methodists from other places having moved into the city, there seemed to be a call for a special effort to provide for regular preaching, and a more spacious and convenient place of worship. Rev. Joshua Taylor passing through the city, on his way to the General Conference, in 1804, as we have heretofore noticed, was informed of the condition of the young society; and hearing that the Protestant Episcopal chapel was for sale, determined that an effort should be made to purchase it. But the church was feeble, Samuel Homer and Daniel Lewis being the only male members. However, with the liberal patronage of Major Ilsley and other friendly citizens, and collections obtained from New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, the house was purchased and repaired, so that a convenient and respectable place of worship was secured. The same year (1804) Portland was made a station, and Joshua Taylor was appointed to it by the Conference. He remained two years. The church, as organized by him on coming to the charge, consisted of eleven members. Under his administration, and through his faithful labors, the congregation was very much increased, and Methodism in Portland placed on a firm foundation. The society, though meeting with much opposition, continued to flourish, under the labors of David Bachelor and Joel Winch, who were the successors of Joshua Taylor.

Joel Winch was appointed to Portland in 1807, and remained two years; during which time, the chapel now standing in Chesnut-street was erected. From the annual returns of members, it appears that there was but a very small advance from 1808 to 1818, when there was quite a secession — about fifty withdrew. Charles Virgin was the stationed preacher. Those were perilous times for the society. Some of the seceders returned, but it is said that many fell away, and made shipwreck of faith. In 1828, the church, with a membership of 313, built a spacious and substantial brick house on Pleasant-street, in the upper part of the city, and in 1829 two preachers were appointed

to Portland. For several years great prosperity was enjoyed by the two societies, so that, at the close of the Conference year in 1835, they comprised nearly 700 church-members. But, strange to say, with this very large number, the trustees of the Pleasant (now called Park) street church, burdened with a debt of some $4000, sunk under discouragement, and, by a hasty transaction, conveyed the house to the Unitarians, who have since occupied it. This was a heavy calamity, which will be felt for many years to come. The pew-holders received but fifty or sixty per cent. on the cost of their pews; many were disaffected, and the church and congregation were scattered to the four winds. Some came to the Chestnut-street church; but the house was inadequate to accommodate but few more than already attended there. Some retained their pews, and are now members of the Unitarian congregation; others scattered to the different churches, so that, in the returns of numbers the next year, a great decrease appears. In 1836 and 1837 the Chestnut-street chapel underwent thorough repairs, and was much enlarged, at an expense of about $6000. In a few years, such were the additions to the church and congregation, that the house became insufficient, and another attempt was made to establish a congregation at the upper part of the city. In 1844, a spacious hall or school-room was obtained, on Bracket-street, and H. M. Blake was appointed to the charge, which was called the city mission. A congregation was soon collected, a flourishing Sabbath-school established, and about sixty members of the Chestnut-street church connected themselves with the new society. Souls were converted; the church and congregation both increased, so that the beginning was marked by many favorable auspices. The place soon became too strait, and it was thought expedient to make an attempt to build a chapel. An elevated site was purchased, and in 1846 a beautiful edifice was completed, and dedicated to Almighty God.* Methodism has since flourished in Portland, and now comprises there more than 700 members.

The early history of Methodism in Bath, as in most other cases where no records are preserved, is very obscure. Jesse

* Rev. E. Shaw to the author.

Lee, while on his tour in Maine in 1794, visited the town, and preached there. It does not appear that it was again visited by a Methodist preacher till 1796, in which year Philip Wager and Jesse Stoneman preached there occasionally. Mr. Stoneman afterwards tarried there a few weeks. In 1798, Rev. J. Brodhead preached in Bath several times; his labors were crowned with success; a reformation followed, the fruits of which were collected in a Class — the first formed in the town.

Subsequently, the Rev. Timothy Merritt took charge of the young society, and remained some time; after which, he removed to Bowdoinham, but continued to preach at Bath occasionally till about 1809. Mr. Merritt was poor, and obliged to work hard to support his family. At the end of his week's toil, he was accustomed to take his boat, and row across the bay and down the river to Bath, a distance of eight miles, and then walk two miles from the landing to the "old meeting-house," where he used to preach, and return home in the same way, so as to be ready to commence his labor on Monday morning. He was esteemed a good preacher even in this early period of his ministry, and his memory is cherished with much affection in Bath.

The small church, being without a pastor, and having only occasional preaching after Mr. Merritt removed, declined, and at last became extinct.

In 1807 Gen. McLellan moved from Monmouth to Bath. His wife had been for several years a member of the M. E. church. In a few years, Mr. Blake, who, with his wife, was a member of the church, also came from Monmouth. Mr. Berry, Mrs. McLellan, and Mrs. Blake, voluntarily united in a Class, and met weekly in a small building on Gen. McLellan's estate. Mr. Berry acted as leader. As they had no preaching, their number continued for a long time without increase.

About 1816 an exhorter in the M. E. church, whose name was Scribner, an utter stranger, arrived in Bath from Vermont; and, though neglected at his introduction by the church with which the few Methodists were wont to worship, so soon as his gifts and piety became known, he was taken cordially by the hand, and his assistance readily accepted. From his labors, directed

evidently by the spirit of God, a very extensive and at that time unparalleled revival ensued, in which about *two hundred* professed faith in Christ. This fruit, however, was gathered into the churches of other denominations, and the poor but useful exhorter was at last hurried away by those who before were glad of his services.

In September, 1817, Rev. John Wilkinson, who had been some years in the travelling connection, but whose health had failed, so that he could no longer preach, located in the town. After recovering somewhat his health, he preached occasionally, as his strength would permit, till some time in the ensuing winter, when Mr. Ambler, a local preacher, was sent on by the Presiding Elder, and remained till the ensuing annual Conference. At this Conference (1818) Rev. Wm. Marsh was appointed to Bath, but for some cause he did not go; and Mr. Chamberline, a member of the Conference, was despatched to the appointment, from another circuit, by the Presiding Elder. His health was poor, and he could perform no other service than to preach on the Sabbath. He remained but a few weeks, when the charge again devolved on Mr. Wilkinson, who continued in the pastoral care of the church and congregation till the next Conference, and received several valuable members into the society. Mr. Wilkinson is a native of Ireland, where he received a respectable education. In early life he was converted, and joined the Wesleyans. He was personally acquainted with Ouseley, and other apostles of Methodism in that country, and was a staunch Methodist, an ardent admirer of Wesley, and a man of deep and uniform piety. He, with his wife, contributed much to the prosperity of Methodism in Bath, by their counsels and encouragement, and their personal sacrifices.

The Rev. Charles Virgin was appointed to Bath in 1819. Hitherto the preaching had been mostly in the old meeting-house belonging to the town, and situated almost a mile from the village; but in 1818 a chapel was projected. It was dedicated during the year 1819, and is now occupied, having been considerably enlarged and improved. To build this house, a debt was contracted, by which the society was embarrassed for several

years. The number in the Classes at this time cannot be exactly ascertained. So far as can be learned, Mr. Virgin left in the society fifty-three members. In 1822 the church, though still feeble, entertained the New England Conference, Bishop Roberts presiding.

In 1828 the whole number of members was only ninety-one. During the year 1829 there was a gracious revival. In 1834 and 1835, there was a general reformation in the town, in which the several denominations shared.

The history of Methodism in Bath, as in almost all cases, has been marked by struggles and discouragements. Wealth and prejudice arrayed themselves against it. But better auspices have attended it in later years. Extensive revivals have prevailed under its labors; it has had the pastoral care of many of the most effective men of our ministry in Maine, and is now a flourishing "station," with more than two hundred members.

There are other primitive Methodist churches in Maine, whose local history would throw much light and interest upon our annals; but we have failed to obtain authentic accounts of them, and, indeed, time has nearly obliterated the necessary data. Most of the few reminiscences of them which still remain we have woven into other parts of our narrative. A veteran * of our ministry in that state has furnished us the following additional items: "Methodism commenced nearly simultaneously in Portland, Kennebec, and Penobscot, about the year 1794. This year Jesse Lee made an excursion through the length and breadth of Maine, where there was anything like roads or inhabitants. The next year he made a similar excursion, and began to lay his plans for all that has subsequently followed. On this visit, he spent considerable time on the Penobscot. He found two church-members only in all this region, viz., Abner Curtis and wife, of Bucksport, who came from the British provinces. The people, however, requested to be supplied by a regular Methodist Itinerant. Consequently, on the return of Mr. Lee to the New London Conference, which sat in July, 1795, he procured the appointment of Rev. Joshua Hall. His circuit

* Rev. J. Atwell.

extended from Union to Orono, then the upper white settlement on the river. Mr. Hall's long circuit embraced in its membership the two persons above named, and no more. This extensive country he travelled, without roads, bridges, or ferries, until the following June, when he was removed to Readfield. During this period there was a considerable revival on his circuit, and shortly before he left he received forty into the society at one time. This was the origin and commencement of Methodism on the Penobscot. The meeting at which he received them was held in a barn in Hampden, in May or June, 1796. When I was first stationed on the Penobscot, in 1812 and 1813, there were three circuits in this section of the Province of Maine. *Penobscot*, which extended from Orland to "down east," and embraced the whole of the Baggadoose country, then so called. *Orrington*, which was my circuit, extended from Orland to Hemlock stream, now Argile, which was nearly the upper settlement on the river. The names of Curtis, Kenny, and Hinks, in Bucksport, of Fowler and Nickerson, in Orrington, and of Marsh, Jameson, and Colburn, in Orono, will long fill a prominent place in the history of Methodism in this region. *Hampden* circuit lay on the west side of the river, and extended indefinitely over a large tract of country. Suffice it to say that Methodism has held a controlling influence in nearly every town on the river, to this day. Bangor alone, I believe, is an exception. Methodism has advanced, with an increased momentum, from the beginning, each year giving a more favorable result than the former. This thought refers particularly to our early history. Our societies, however, were feeble, and found it difficult to compete with opposing influences, until the general revivals which commenced among us about the year 1814 or 1815. Until about this time there was but little Methodist influence on the Kennebec river, from the mouth to its source. When I was stationed on Hallowell circuit, in 1814, there was very little Methodist labor, except what was included in Hallowell circuit, from Bath to Norridgewock. My regular work was from Gardiner to Skowhegan. I found one small Class in Hallowell, one in Augusta village, and one in the upper part of Augusta; and one

brother the leader of the three. There was a small Class in Gardiner. An old brother once said to me that the greatest cross he had to bear was to notify his neighbors of a Methodist meeting — such was the opposition. In Bath and Wiscasset the state of things was little, if any, better. But here our history changes its aspect. A great and glorious revival commenced in Gardiner in the summer of 1814, which spread up and down the river, and much of which is still in existence; and we confidently expect that it will continue to exert a healthful influence, to the end of the world. In Gardiner and vicinity, I received about one hundred into society, in a few months. The work spread more gradually in Hallowell and Augusta, but great strength was added to the societies there at that time. Hallowell has long been an independent and important station. Augusta has been a hard spot to cultivate, but within a few years it has gained much strength and influence. Bath and Wiscasset are now independent stations, of very considerable importance. There are few places of any considerable importance in Maine that do not now enjoy and support a stated ministry of our order. To God be all the glory; and may we take new courage, and press on in the heavenly work, believing that this work and this counsel is of the Lord, and that it can never be overthrown!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR 1806–7.

Asbury. — The New York Conference. — New England Conference. — Examination of Character. — Other Proceedings. — Asbury Itinerating.

In the early part of May, 1806, Asbury arrived in New York city, on his northern and eastern route. On the 3d he visited Staten Island. "I viewed," he says, "the spot where I first landed on the island, in October, 1771: I am alive, and about my Master's work still;" and he adds, with deep emotion, exclamations of praise to God.

On Tuesday, 16th, the New York Conference commenced its session in the city of New York. Asbury says: "We sat seven hours in each day, in great love, order, and peace. A paper was read, setting forth the uncertain state of the superintendency, and proposing the election of seven Elders, from each of the seven Conferences, to meet at Baltimore, July, 4, 1807, for the sole purpose of establishing the American superintendency on a surer foundation; this subject will be submitted to the consideration of all the Conferences. The answer to Dr. Coke's letter, by the Conference of New York, was read, to be submitted to all the Conferences. I preached three times, and ordained three African Deacons. We had preaching in the Park, as well as regularly in the meeting-houses, and a day of fasting and prayer for the health of the city, the success of our Conference labors, and the prosperity of Zion. I was greatly supported and blest. The preachers were, perhaps, never better satisfied with their stations."

The session closed on Thursday, 22nd inst. On the following Sunday, Asbury was preaching in New Haven. He wrote in his Journal, that day, "Since the 16th of April, 1805, I have, according to my reckoning, travelled five thousand miles: everlasting glory be to my all-sufficient God!"

On the next Friday, after a day's journey of forty-five miles, he reached Thompson, "*faint, yet pursuing*," he writes. On Thursday he arrived among his endeared friends at Waltham, where he tarried the next day, and preached in the evening. On Saturday he reached Boston, where he spent the Sabbath. "I preached," he writes, "in Boston; as usual with me in this place, it was an open season; some souls were powerfully moved, — myself, for one. Monday, 2, I took a walk to West Boston, to see the new chapel [Bromfield-st.], eighty-four by sixty-four feet. The upper window-frames were put in. We came to Lynn at two o'clock: I preached at two o'clock, on Haggai 2: 8. After meeting we rode as far as Marblehead; here Joseph Crawford preached. I find that David Bachelor has been useful in this town; a revival has taken place. Friday, 5, we went towards Buxton, Me., to attend the camp-meeting. At two o'clock we came on the ground; there were twenty preachers, travelling and local. Saturday, 6, I preached; and on the Sunday also. Some judged there were about five thousand people on the ground. There were displays of Divine power, and some conversions. Our journey into Maine has been through dust and heat, in toil of body, and in extraordinary temptation of soul; but I felt that our way was of God."

On Wednesday, 11th, he arrived at Canaan, N. H., where the New England Conference commenced its session the next day. About forty-four members were present, besides probationers and visiters. The Conference comprised more than half a hundred preachers, and presented an aspect not only of numerical, but of no little moral and intellectual strength. It included several men of staunch force and talent, among whom were Hedding, Soule, Pickering, Ostrander, Brodhead, Jayne, Branch, Sabin, and Ruter. Thomas Branch was elected secretary, and Daniel Webb appointed his assistant. Asbury says: "We went through our business with haste and peace, sitting seven hours a day. The York Conference address respecting the superintendency was concurred in, and the seven Elders for this Conference elected accordingly. We did not (to my grief) tell our experiences, nor make observations as to what we had known of the

work of God: the members were impatient to be gone, particularly the married townsmen."

They exercised however, their usual vigilance in the examination of candidates, and the records bear brief but significant testimony to the thoroughness and frankness of these examinations. One young man, who had travelled two years, was dropped because of "his dislike of discipline and infant baptism;" another received the same summary treatment for having "left his circuit without the consent of his Presiding Elder," though "it was voted that a testimonial of his godly walk be given him." Another is pronounced "a man of excellent spirit, and a dispassionate speaker." Lewis Bates is said to be "pious, useful, — but a loud speaker." Another is said "to want energy." William Stevens is pronounced "devout, zealous acceptable;" Dan Young, "persevering, studious, improvable;" Caleb Fogg, "plain in address, established in doctrine and discipline, — useful." Another was "of small abilities, sincere, humble, meek, and promised usefulness; another was "doubtful, — a singular character." Eleazer Wells is pronounced "an excellent young man, — profitable;" Solomon Sias' "character was unexceptionable and devout, and his abilities improvable." Joel Steele is said to be "devout, diligent, useful." One is declared to be "godly, with a large family," and is "rejected;" another is "pious, zealous, exemplary, abrupt." Henry Martin was "useful, but labored excessively." Another is "full of oddities, somewhat useful, improved." Benjamin Bishop had "small abilities, but was a holy man."

William Goodhue, Joshua Taylor, Aaron Humphrey, Asa Heath, and Alexander McLane, located. Crawford J. Smith withdrew.

The usual financial record is omitted, except intimations that the Conference voted to draw on the Chartered Fund for $150, on the Book Concern for $300, and a second draft on the latter for $300 more, "the dividend of Baltimore Conference." The last amount we suppose to be a donation from that noble Conference, which for years gave some such annual testimonial of its

maternal care for the young Conference which its own sons had formed in these Eastern States.

The Conference voted, in concurrence of a proposition from the New York Conference, in favor of a delegated General Conference, "for the express purpose of strengthening the superintendency," — yeas twenty-eight, nays fifteen. It was agreed "that seven delegates from each Conference were sufficient to form a delegated General Conference;" and Joshua Soule, George Pickering, Daniel Ostrander, Elijah R. Sabin, John Brodhead, Peter Jayne, and Daniel Webb, were elected in behalf of the New England Conference.

"On Sunday, 15, I ordained," says Asbury, "eleven Elders in the woods. At three o'clock I preached in the meeting-house; it was a season of power."

The next day he was on his route westward; Tuesday evening, at White's river, Vermont, he says: "From New Haven to White's river, we have made, by computation, four hundred and sixty miles. I have had sufferings in the flesh, but perfect peace of mind."

On Wednesday, 18, he reached Barnard, Vt. "I preached," he writes, "at Thomas Freeman's, on Acts 26: 17, 18. Here is a lively, large society; we had a full house at a short warning."

He was at Burlington on Saturday, after a ride, during the day, of forty miles. "I am resolved," he there wrote, "to be in every part of the work while I live, to preside. I feel as if I was fully taught the necessity of being made perfect through sufferings and labors. I pass over, in silence, cases of pain and grief of body and mind. On the Sabbath I preached in an upper room at Fuller's, to about four hundred people: my subject was Luke 4: 18, 19, and God bore witness to his own word. Why did I not visit this country sooner? Ah! what is the toil of beating over rocks, hills, mountains, and deserts, five thousand miles a year? — nothing, when we reflect it is done for God, for Christ, for the Holy Spirit; the church of God; the souls of poor sinners; the preachers of the Gospel in the seven Conferences, one hundred and thirty thousand members, and one or

two millions, who congregate with us in the solemn worship of God — oh, it is nothing!"

On Monday he was again away. He preached at Vergennes and Bridport during the day, and at Hampton the day following. Sabbath, the 28th, he spent at a camp-meeting in Sharon, Ct., the results of which he speaks of as important. "We had," he writes, "abundant spiritual harvests. Glory to God!"

On Wednesday, July 2nd, he reached New York city. He had been accompanied, through his New England tour, by Joseph Crawford, who now, he says, "came over the ferry with me. When about to part, he turned away his face and wept. Ah! I am not made for such scenes! — I felt exquisite pain." Such was the susceptibility of the heart of this great man, who had nevertheless isolated himself from the strongest relations of the affections, for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. It was a remark of Melancthon, that "the affections are peculiarly forcible in minds of a superior order." It is a tendency of such minds to conceal the intensity of their emotions; but at times the heart reveals itself, in spite of the head, and the strong man armed is found to carry under his cuirass of strength the sensitive affections of the child. Asbury's Journals abound in touches of sensibility, and present not a few examples of even poetical sentiment.

CHAPTER XXIX.

APPOINTMENTS AND PREACHERS.

Ecclesiastical Plans. — Joel Steele. — His Appointments. — Character. — Death. — Caleb Fogg. — Labors. — Character. — Solomon Sias. — Early Life. — Primitive Quarterly Meeting. — Persecution. — Appointments. — Origin of "Zion's Herald." — William Hunt. — His History. — Sanctification. — Sublime Death. — Character.

THE appointments of the New England Conference, for the year 1806–7, were as follows:

BOSTON DISTRICT. George Pickering, *Presiding Elder. Boston*, Peter Jayne, Samuel Merwin; *Lynn*, Daniel Webb; *Marblehead*, Alfred Metcalf; *Salisbury and Salem*, William Stevens; *Provincetown*, Elijah Willard; *Sandwich and Scituate*, Erastus Otis, Nathaniel Elder; *Poplin and Sandown*, Henry Martin; *Nantucket*, Joshua Crowell; *New Bedford*, Epaphras Kibby; *Newport*, Reuben Hubbard; *Bristol and Somerset*, Joseph Snelling; *Rhode Island and Portsmouth*, Levi Walker; *Norton and Easton*, Nehemiah Coye.

NEW LONDON DISTRICT. Thomas Branch, *Presiding Elder. Pomfret*, Thomas Perry, Elisha Streeter; *Tolland*, John Tinkman, Theophilus Smith; *Ashburnham*, Benjamin Hill, Bela Willis; *Needham*, John Gove, Thomas Asbury; *Providence*, Pliny Brett, Joseph Smith; *New London*, Ebenezer Washburn, G. R. Norris.

VERMONT DISTRICT. Elijah R. Sabin, *Presiding Elder. Vershire*, Elijah Hedding; *Barre*, Philip Munger, Jonathan Chaney; *Danville*, Joseph Fairbank, Hollis Sampson; *Stanstead*, Philip Ayer; *Lunenburg*, Joel Steele; *Landaff*, Asa Kent, Isaac Pease.

NEW HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT. John Brodhead, *Presiding Elder. Barnard and Rochester*, Dan Perry, Nathan Fox; *Wethersfield*, Thomas Skeel; *Athens*, Dan Young; *Bridgewater*, Joel Winch; *Hanover*, Joseph Baker; *Grantham*, Caleb Dustin, Benjamin

Bishop; *Loudon*, James Young; *Tuftenboro'*, Lewis Bates, Warren Banister; *Northfield*, Martin Ruter; *Centre Harbor*, Hezekiah Field.

Portland District. Oliver Beale, *Presiding Elder*. *Bowdoinham*, Daniel Ricker; *Durham*, Ebenezer Wells; *Portland*, David Bachelor; *Scarboro'*, Joseph Farrar; *Falmouth*, Samuel Thompson, Caleb Fogg; *Poland*, Solomon Sias; *Bethel*, Clement Parker; *Livermore*, John Wilkinson, David Stimson.

Kennebec District. Joshua Soule, *Presiding Elder*. *Readfield*, Dyer Burge, Benj. F. Lambord; *Norridgewock*, Luther Chamberlain; *Hallowell*, David Carr; *Vassalboro'*, John Williamson; *Bristol*, Allen H. Cobb; *Union River*, Ebenezer Fairbank; *Union*, Samuel Hillman, Jonas Weston; *Orrington*, William Hunt; *Hampden*, John Green.

The Ashgrove District, belonging to the New York Conference, and travelled by Daniel Brumley, lay mostly within the Eastern States, and included the following New England circuits: — *Durham and Fletcher*, Henry Eames and Reuben Harris; *Brandon*, Samuel Howard and George Powers; *Grand Isle*, Dexter Bates; *Vergennes*, Samuel Draper; *Cambridge* (partly in New York and partly in Vermont), Noble W. Thomas, Nathaniel Gage.

The Rhinebeck District, travelled by Peter Moriarty, was also mostly within the Eastern States, only two of its circuits bearing New York names. It comprised the following New England appointments: — *Pittsfield*, John Robertson, James M. Smith; *Whittingham*, Laban Clark; *South Bolton*, William Anson; *Litchfield*, Nathan Emery, Samuel Cochran; *Granville*, Eben Smith.

On the New York District, travelled by William Thatcher, were, *Redding*, Nathan Felch and Oliver Sikes; *Middletown*, Luman Andrus and Zalmon Lyon.

The ecclesiastical plans for the year comprised *eight* districts and part of a ninth, *sixty-four* circuits and stations, and *ninety-seven* preachers, including the Presiding Elders, with the exception of Thatcher, who travelled, however, into the heart of Connecticut. There had been a gain, during the preceding

year, of *two* districts, *eight* circuits, and *nine* preachers. It must be borne in mind, however, that while these statistics show a real progress, they present no exact measure of it; for the numerical increase or diminution of the districts and circuits often depended upon modifications of their former boundaries; yet such modifications were the result of the actual growth of the church.

The name of JOEL STEELE is reported this year, for the first time, among the appointments of the Itinerant ministry. He was born in Tolland, Conn., August 17th, 1782. When about twenty-two years of age, his attention was awakened to religion, under the ministry of the Methodist Itinerants, who, about that time, began their labors in that part of Connecticut. He labored as an exhorter and as a local preacher for some years, and in 1806 joined the New England Conference. "His first circuit," says one of his old fellow-laborers,* "was Lunenburg, near the Canada line, some two hundred miles from his father's house, — and not a very small field of labor either. His next circuit was Harwich, on Cape Cod, at least three hundred miles distant from his last circuit, and no nearer his home. His field of labor this year embraced all the lower part of the Cape. It was hard labor, hard fare, and some fruit; but no complaining. His next appointment was Bristol, in the State of Maine. This removal was even greater than that of the preceding year. It was on his way to Maine that I had the privilege of hearing him preach, for the first time. Both the text and the sermon are indelibly impressed upon my memory. The discourse was plain, simple truth, delivered with apostolic power and energy. In 1809 we find him in Vermont, on the Vershire circuit. Two hundred miles were common removals in those days; and, to graduate regularly, a preacher must visit Cape Cod, travel in Maine, and burnish up on the hills of Vermont. Ashburnham, New London, East Greenwich, Barre, Barnard, Vershire, Wethersfield, Unity, were his subsequent circuits, in course. Preachers that travelled these circuits were three weeks from home; and one week their appointments were in the

* Rev. T. C. Pierce.

neighborhood of home. On the Barre circuit, in 1806, I was permitted to be Brother Steele's colleague. Here I became more intimately acquainted with him, and can speak of him with greater confidence. He was unwearied in his labors, preaching ten or twelve times a week; faithful in pastoral visits, exercising a power of faith, and a freedom in prayer, connected with a humble view of himself, and an entire exemption from envy and jealousy, which altogether made him a most desirable colleague. If his success in other fields of labor may be judged by his success on the Barre circuit, he may truly be styled a revival minister; and there is no doubt in my mind but there are very many hundreds, if not thousands, who will be stars in his crown of rejoicing. Wellfleet, Eastham, Sandwich, Saugus, Marlboro', Barnstable, Chatham, Truro, Weymouth, Easton, Walpole, were his later fields of labor. During his ministry, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Providence Conferences were set off from what was called the New England Conference. At the last division, he received his appointment in the Providence Conferences; and when Walpole was transferred back to the New England Conference, he, being stationed there, came with it, and subsequently was appointed to Gloucester."

During a number of years he suffered from a cancerous affection of the lip, which at last terminated his useful life. In 1845 he was placed on the superannuated list of the New England Conference, and on the 23d of August, the ensuing year, he expired, in the peace of the Gospel. A ministerial brother, who attended his last days, writes: "I have been privileged with much of his company. I have much admired the fortitude with which he bore his great sufferings, — the patience he exercised, and the heavenly spirit he continually manifested. My colleague, or myself, attended prayers with him at least once a day, and many of them were very interesting seasons to us. He seemed to feel most deeply, and often shouted, 'Glory to God!' The nature of his disease was such that it was with difficulty that he could speak; yet at times he would break out, — 'My faith is clear as the sun! There is not the shadow

of a dimming veil or doubt concerning myself, or the religion I have preached and recommended to others!'"*

As he approached the hour of his deliverance, both his sufferings and his triumphs increased. The last week of his life was especially memorable to his family. He was within the precincts of heaven; and it seemed as if the "excellent glory" shone through its gates upon him, as he approached them. He expressed assurance of his final victory. The day before he died, he took a solemn and most affecting leave of his friends, delivering to them his last counsels. He gave also to a brother clergyman a "memorable charge." As a providential relief to his agonies, he soon after sunk into a lethargy; but would frequently arouse himself for an instant, exclaiming, "Glory! glory to God in the highest! All is well." At last, as the summer Sabbath closed, the veteran soldier of the cross entered into his eternal rest. The church lamented him as one of its patriarchs. The beautiful purity of his character endeared him to all good men who had the happiness to enjoy his acquaintance. His brethren of the New England Conference say: "He possessed an amiable, humble, and cheerful spirit; and was exceedingly liberal in feeling toward all Christians. His heart was ever alive to the things of God, and to the interests of his great work, which he was reluctant to give up. He possessed a clear understanding, sober sense, simplicity, and fervor. His preaching was plain, manly, earnest, with a degree of pathos, and often with much effect. He was laborious while his health lasted, and never shrunk from the trials of his lot." †

How similar are our records of most of these good and truly great men! They lived like saints, labored like giants, and died like conquerors. Such is the uniform tenor of their noble history. Another hero of the period passes before us for the first time the present year, — the veteran Caleb Fogg, of precious memory in Maine. He was born in Epping, Vt., March 17th, 1761. The 12th day of January, 1795, he commemorated as the date of his religious life. He was converted among the little company of Methodists who formed, at Monmouth, the first

* Rev. H. M. Bridge. † Minutes, 1847.

Class in Maine, and in 1795 was appointed their leader. In 1798 he was licensed as an exhorter, and in 1800 as a local preacher. Asbury ordained him a local deacon, at the Buxton Conference of 1804; and at the Canaan session of the present year, he was admitted as a probationer. His appointments, down to 1813, were Falmouth, Hallowell, Norridgewock, Boothbay, Readfield, Georgetown and Bristol circuits, all in Maine. After performing faithful and self-sacrificing service in these charges, he located, but continued to labor incessantly for the church. In 1817 he resumed his travels, and was appointed successively to Livermore and Vienna, Livermore, Poland, Scarboro', Gray, Readfield, Durham and Pittston circuits, Maine. In 1828 he was placed on the supernumerary list, and in 1830, "on account of the infirmities of age, and past faithful services, his brethren most cheerfully granted him a superannuated relation." * The heroic spirit of the old Itinerant still bore him up; and, though bending under nearly three-score years and ten, he continued to travel, visiting the societies, and preaching and praying among the people, until within a few months of his death. He rejoined his old fellow-laborers, in heaven, Sept. 6, 1839, in the 78th year of his age. He has left an impression on thousands of minds, which cannot soon forget him. "Caleb Fogg," says the obituary of the Maine Conference, "was no ordinary man. He was a perfect original, — himself in and out of the pulpit, for he copied no man in matter or manner. His Bible was always about him. As a preacher, he was plain, faithful, and unvarnished in the delineation of truth. As a laborer, he stood high in the estimation of his brethren, and his piety was of no ordinary cast. Two of his brethren in the ministry called on him a few weeks before his death, to whom he said, with holy animation, 'I have peace with God; — all is well.' Thus lived and died our much-beloved and never-to-be-forgotten Brother Fogg, and we have no doubt he rests where 'none shall say, I am sick.'"

Solomon Sias was born in Loudon, N. H., Feb. 25, 1781. When between nine and ten years of age, he was so seriously

* Minutes, 1841.

impressed with a sense of his need of Divine mercy, that for a season he used to go by himself into secret, and kneeling before the Lord, offer the petitions of a child to his Heavenly Father. His prayers were those of a child, and his faith that of a child, also; and the Lord gave him a blessing suited to the capacity of a child. He was spiritually blessed and comforted, and continued in this enjoyment for a season; but not being favored with religious instruction, he lost his enjoyment, yet not the remembrance of it. He has often been heard to allude to it, in speaking of his early religious exercises, since he has become a preacher of the Gospel.

In 1792 he removed, with his parents, to Danville, Vt. Several providential events marked this early part of his history, and left a deep impression on his heart. In the autumn of 1803, a Quarterly Meeting was held in Danville. The Love Feast was at the house of Dr. Uri Babbit, on Sabbath morning. When Mr. Sias arrived, he saw a young man sitting on the door-step, who asked him if he wished to go in. He replied that he did. The young man answered, "You cannot go in; the door is closed." At this he was deeply affected, and the thought revolved in his mind, "Shall I come, at last, when the door shall be forever shut against me?" After sitting and reflecting a while, he rose and went to the window, where he stood and looked in, and heard the testimonies of Christian experience. At the close of the Love Feast, an invitation was given for those to rise who wished religion; among them were some of his youthful associates. This deepened the impression already made upon his mind. On returning home, he walked out and reviewed the scenes of the day, together with his own moral condition; and from that hour he resolved to seek religion. Having heard the preacher make some appointments for the week, he went to them, and afterwards became a regular attendant on the Methodist ministry. His convictions were deep, — his reflections on his past life painful, — and at times he thought all hope of mercy was gone. At length he came to the conclusion, that if he perished, he would perish at the throne of grace, pleading for pardon. In about three months, another Quarterly Meeting was held at Danville;

he attended. When in the Love Feast, he took his seat in a corner of the room, and sat in silence. While others were speaking, it was strongly impressed on his mind to rise and express his feelings; but he put the question to himself, "What can I say?" The answer seemed from above, — "The Holy Ghost shall teach you in that hour what ye shall say." Not having faith, he was afraid to trust the word. He meditated what to say, and rose to speak. The Spirit truly taught him what to say; which was, to confess that he was a sinner, — needed religion, — was resolved to seek it, and to ask the prayers of all God's people. These he undoubtedly received; and in about ten days after (December, 1803), while in his chamber, in fervent prayer, the Lord spoke peace to his soul. Not long after, his name was enrolled on the Class paper.

Mr. Sias passed through the usual graduation of our earlier ministry, — from the office of an exhorter to that of a local preacher, and finally to the Itinerancy. On the 25th of September, 1805, he obeyed the call of his Presiding Elder, Elijah R. Sabin, and began to travel. He had a fair initiation to the lights and shadows of the travelling ministry. The first public service he attended was a Quarterly Meeting on Whittingham circuit. As the Methodists had but few meeting-houses in those early days, their Quarterly Meetings, in the warm seasons of the year, were usually held in barns or groves; and, in the cold seasons, in private dwellings. At this meeting, the preaching on Saturday was in a barn, which was prepared and seated for the Sabbath. After the day service, prayer-meetings were appointed for the evening. The young candidate put up with a Baptist brother, at whose house one of the social prayer-meetings was held. While all were kneeling, and engaged in supplication, "the power of God fell upon the people, and in an instant about twenty were prostrate on the floor;"* the Divine glory seemed to fill the house. The next morning he repaired early to the place where public worship was to be held. On entering, he saw an effigy suspended by a rope, directly before the preacher's stand. He gave the Presiding Elder notice of it, and they, with

* Rev. Mr. Sias to the author.

the gentleman of the house, privately took it down and deposited it under the floor. On Monday, as they passed through Brattleboro', a man came out of a printing-office with a bottle in his hand, and ironically asked them to drink with him. At the south end of the street they passed a tailor's shop, where there appeared to be a mock prayer-meeting. Such were the ordinary trials of our primitive ministry.

Mr. Sias was received on probation, at the Conference of the present year, and sent to Poland circuit, Me. His subsequent appointments were, in 1807, Barnard and Rochester; 1808, Barre; 1809, Athens, and 1810, Wethersfield, all in Vermont. In 1811, he was appointed to the charge of the New Hampshire district, which embraced that part of Vermont that borders on the Connecticut, from Canada to Lunenburg; all New Hampshire from Canada south to Charlestown on the Connecticut; Hooksett, Allenstown and Pembroke, on the Merrimack, and Rochester, on the Cocheco, near Dover; it included, also, several towns in Maine, bordering on New Hampshire. Conway circuit, situated in the Pigwocket country, east of the White Mountains, and embracing a number of towns in Maine, as well as in New Hampshire, was this year taken from Portland district, and connected with that of New Hampshire. The Presiding Elder of this vast charge had to perform gigantic labors. The ride on horse-back was, yearly, more than three thousand miles, over a rough and mountainous country. Mr. Sias travelled it in the midst of those memorable cold seasons which commenced in 1806, and continued ten years. Provisions were extremely scarce; in many places nearly approaching famine. The people travelled distances that might almost be termed journeys, to procure corn. The scarcity became such, that those who could not procure bread, dug up the roots of the buckthorn (a species of shrub resembling wild brake, but more nutritious), and boiled it with their milk, to make it more nourishing. And, in some families, mothers made bread for their children of flour sifted from ground cobs. This scarcity was accompanied by an epidemic, called the spotted fever, or the *cold plague*. Its ravages were alarming, and its progress so

rapid, that often the victim would be a corpse in a few hours after the first symptoms were known. The people, in many places, made common interest under the calamity. Town-meetings were called, physicians employed, medicines procured, and other necessaries provided, at the public expense. The following year, 1812, the United States declared war against Great Britain. This involved the churches in new troubles. The sword, the famine and the pestilence, combined, produced an excitement which was very unfavorable to religion. The labors of the preachers were great, their compensations small, and their sufferings beyond description. Amid these multiplied scenes of woe, Mr. Sias' heart sunk, and he wrote to his friends to prepare him a resting-place until the calamities should be overpast. Now came the test. "Will not the good shepherd lay down his life for the sheep?" "Is it not the hireling that fleeth when he seeth the wolf coming?" "What will become of the flock, if you leave them?" "Do they not more than ever need your labors, your prayers, your counsels, your visits of comfort and consolation?" He revolved these questions, and came to the final conclusion to live or die with the people of his charge. As Presiding Elder, he shared with the preachers of his district in their quarterly receipts, according to the disciplinary ratio belonging to each; and received $19.75 as his dividend for his first year's services. His travelling expenses, in performing a tour of more than three thousand miles on horseback, amounted to $18.71. This, subtracted from the amount of his receipts, left $1.04 as his salary for his first year's labors on the district. The next year, from June 1812 to June 1813, yielded a somewhat better support. His receipts were $25.60, — his travelling expenses, $20.27, — which, deducted from the sum received, left him $5.33, the amount of his second year's salary. From June 1813 to June 1814, his receipts were $40.18, — travelling expenses, $21.74, — leaving him $18.24 for his third year's salary. His accounts from June 1814 to June 1815 are lost; but he continued his services on the district four years, with similar compensation for his services.

His long rides produced hernia, from which he has never

recovered. On account of his bodily infirmities, he was appointed, in 1815, to the "station" of Lynn, with George Pickering. In 1816 he was sent to Marblehead; in 1817 and 1818, Providence, R. I.; 1819 and 1820, Portland, Me.; 1821, Fairhaven, Mass.; 1822, New Bedford, Mass.; 1823, Fairhaven and New Bedford, Mass.; 1824, Boston. He continued in charge at Boston until the first of October, when he undertook the publication of Zion's Herald.

The Methodists in New England had long felt the need of a medium through which they might defend themselves, and the doctrines and government of their church, against the attacks and false representations of their adversaries. In 1815 a publication was commenced, entitled, "The New England Missionary Magazine." It was edited by Martin Ruter, and printed at Concord, N. H., by Isaac Hill. It ceased, after four quarterly numbers had been issued. In 1821 the New England Conference formed an association, styled the "Society for giving and receiving Religious Intelligence." This gave rise to the establishment of Zion's Herald, printed by Moore & Prouse, under the direction of the committee of the society, of which Elijah Hedding was president. The first number was printed January 9th, 1823, on a small royal sheet, the pages measuring only nine by sixteen inches. At the commencement of the second volume, the size of the sheet was enlarged. The patronage was small, and the publishers became involved. To save the credit of the Conference, and keep the Herald in circulation, it became necessary to purchase the paper from its publishers, with their books, and to put the whole establishment under the direction of the committee of the New England Conference. This committee met in Boston, and, on the recommendation of Barber Badger, the editor, came to the conclusion to purchase the paper, and conduct the business as the property of the Conference. They appointed S. Sias, J. Bonney, and D. Young, a sub-committee to carry the plan into effect. Serious embarrassments soon appeared in their way. The Conference was not a corporate body. Their committee had no legal powers, and the sub-committee had no security. What-

ever might be done must be on personal responsibility. Messrs. Bonney and Young therefore resigned their appointment, and requested Mr. Sias to proceed in his own name, and on his own private responsibility. He accordingly contracted with the publishers, and taking a transfer in his own name, became personally holden for all liabilities. To give success to the enterprise, a new office, and the whole printing apparatus, together with a select company of workmen, must be obtained. Money was requisite for these changes. To help him to this, Messrs. Thomas Patten, William W. Motley, and John Clark, endorsed for him to the City Bank, in the sum of two thousand dollars; and took a mortgage of the establishment as their security. A new office was obtained, in Congress-street, and furnished with printing machinery. Mr. Sias entered the office as publisher, and Mr. Badger as editor. Specimen numbers were struck off in October, containing the prospectus, and sent to all the Itinerant Methodist preachers in the United States to whom access could be obtained through the post-office. About the first of January, 1825, subscribers' names were sent in from all parts of the country, to commence with the new year. In a short time he had them in every state of the Union, both the Canadas, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland; but from the people of New England its chief support was derived. It was their own beloved offspring, and shared largely in their sympathies and affections. To keep such a machine in motion, more money must be had. The trustees of the Methodist religious society in Boston endorsed for him in the sum of five thousand dollars, at the Commonwealth Bank; and, having cancelled the first mortgage, he secured them on the establishment. The subscribers constantly increased during the time Mr. Sias continued in the office, which was three years; and when he retired the weekly issues numbered about six thousand. He closed his connection with the paper at the end of his third year, Sept. 30th, 1827. He had taken up his note of five thousand dollars at the Commonwealth Bank, met all his other liabilities, and left, for the benefit of his successors, in various kinds of property, somewhat over eight thousand dollars,

besides a list of about six thousand subscribers. The net profits of the Herald, after meeting all its expenses and liabilities, from Oct. 1, 1824, to Oct. 1, 1827, were eight thousand and eighteen dollars and ninety-four cents. The net profits of the last quarter, from July 1 to Oct. 1, 1827, were eight hundred and forty-seven dollars and sixty cents.

Such was the origin of Zion's Herald, — a paper which still flourishes, and which has had a leading agency in most of the great interests and fortunes of the church during more than a quarter of a century. Mr. Sias conducted the experiment of its publication with decided ability.

In most of the appointments we have mentioned, his labors were attended with marked success; especially was this the case at Providence, Portland, and New Bedford. We shall have occasion hereafter to refer to his ministrations in these stations. On terminating his relation to the Herald, he was placed on the supernumerary list of the New England Conference. He had done faithful service during twenty-two years, and was now permitted to retire to the same paternal farm from which, in 1805, he went forth into the Itinerant ministry. In consideration of his physical infirmities, occasioned by the exposures and labors of his early circuits, he was granted, in 1828, a superannuated relation to the Conference. He still lives among us — a veteran of three-score years and ten, witnessing with joy the continued triumphs of the cause for which he labored and sacrificed so much in the days of his earlier vigor.

William Hunt was admired and lamented for the promise of his youthful but brief ministry. He was one of those "shining marks" which "death loves." He was born at East Sudbury, Mass., June 9th, 1787, and early manifested an unusually amiable disposition and a precocious intelligence. Misdirected reading, however, introduced him, even when quite young, to speculative errors in religion. From these he was rescued, through the instrumentality of the Methodist ministry. When in his fifteenth year, he was soundly converted to God. He continued, with much success, his academic studies, but betook himself also, with constant interest, to the study of the Holy

Scriptures, portions of which he daily committed to memory. In the eighteenth year of his age he received license as a local preacher, and in 1806 entered, with youthful but sanctified ardor, the Itinerant ministry. He was first appointed to Orrington circuit, Me., and in 1807 to Conway, Me. In 1808 he travelled Bridgewater circuit, N. H. This year was an epoch in his brief but luminous career. He renewedly and entirely consecrated himself to God, by a special covenant, and received the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of entire sanctification, a tenet which Wesley considered the chief responsibility of Methodism,* was an element of extraordinary power among our primitive preachers. Its exemplification in their lives clothed them with a glorious sanctity, and its promulgation in their ministrations spread "a savor of life unto life among the people." It stamped forever the character of this young ambassador of Christ, and through his instrumentality the characters of others who were blessed with his devoted ministry.

His appointment for 1809 was at Marblehead, Mass.; but here symptoms of pulmonary disease, with which he had been some time afflicted, assumed a fatal severity, and he was compelled to retire from his labors. He went to his parental home, at Penobscot, to die, giving thanks to God on his way for the great consolation of the Gospel. He paused on his route at a Quarterly Meeting, on Tuftonboro' circuit, "where," says Ebenezer F. Newell, "My soul was blest. Bro. Hunt was present, on his way home to die (for he died in a few months). He had worn himself down by exposures in travelling and preaching, in hopes of winning precious souls to Christ. In addressing the people, he said, 'Do you ask if I am not sorry for thus exposing myself? I answer, No: and had I ten lives, I would lay them all down in so good a cause.'" Protracted sufferings followed, but they were borne with unwavering patience and trust in his Lord. "With the deepest humility, modesty, and

* "This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly he appears to have raised us up." — *Wesley's Works*, vol. VII., p. 154.

triumph, he said 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life.'" Devoted to God in his life, and aspiring after his immediate presence amidst the pantings of death, this young saint departed at last in a manner befitting his character. His difficulty of breathing required him to sit in a chair till a few moments before his death; faint with the last struggle, he asked to be laid on a bed. Having gained a brief repose, he begged his friends to help him upon his knees, and while they sustained him in this suppliant posture, his purified spirit ascended to the presence of his God. Those who witnessed the scene could appreciate the ancient prayer, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." The obituary of the New England Conference, which we attribute to Rev. Bishop Soule, says: "As a *Christian*, in the profession both of justifying and sanctifying grace, he was a pattern of devotion. As a *scholar*, few have excelled him in the branches of literature he pursued. As a *minister*, he was sound in doctrine, and well read in the Holy Scriptures. He possessed correct views of Gospel order and discipline, and was in his life a comment upon them. He possessed, in a large measure, the grand principle of ministerial oratory, *the power of the Holy Ghost.* I have been intimately acquainted with him, and can say, with propriety, I have known but few in whom so many Christian and ministerial excellences were united." He died June 10th, 1810.

CHAPTER XXX.

INCIDENTS AND RESULTS

Death of Bishop Whatcoat. — His History. — Character. — Asbury's Estimate of him. — Eulogium at his Grave. — Laborers in Maine. — Solomon Sias at Harrison. — New Hampshire. — Ebenezer F. Newell. — Anecdotes. — New London Circuit. — Trials. — Abner Wood. — Colchester. — Revivals. — Statistics.

THE present ecclesiastical year was rendered memorable by the decease of the sainted Whatcoat, — the first death in the history of the Methodist episcopacy. In four out of the six years of his superintendence, he presided at the sessions of the New England Conference. We have already noticed his eminent virtues as a private and public man; but, as we here take our final leave of him, it is a fitting place for a final reference to his life and character. It is to be regretted that any notice of him must necessarily be but a reference. No biographical document, no portrait, nor scarcely a letter, which can throw light upon his history, is extant. But his memory and his image are precious to the hearts of the few venerable Methodists who survive from his day, and who revered him as one that, like Enoch, "walked with God."

Richard Whatcoat was born in Quinton, Gloucestershire, England, in the year 1736. He removed early to the town of Darlaston, Staffordshire, where, in his twenty-first year, he became a hearer of Wesley's travelling "helpers." Disposed from his earliest life to serious reflection, he very soon felt the influence of the powerful ministrations of those devoted men; and on the third day of September, 1758, believed in the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation. His Christian experience seems to have been very definitely marked, for he was able to refer it to precise dates. On the 28th of March, 1761, after re-consecrating himself entirely to God, he was enabled to believe that "the blood

of Jesus Christ cleansed him from all sin;" and the day was ever sacred in his memory as the date of his "sanctification." It left its impress on his whole subsequent life; and after professing and preaching this great grace through forty-five years, his brethren in the ministry, as we have already noticed, affirmed, that, "if any man on earth possessed it, surely it was Richard Whatcoat."*

After exercising his talents as a Leader, Steward, and Local Preacher, successfully, for eight or nine years, he was received by Wesley into the travelling ministry. Sixteen years he spent in the Wesleyan Itinerancy, at its most difficult posts, in England, Ireland and Wales, and in its most troubled times. He was found faithful in all trials, indefatigable in his travels, impressive and effective in the pulpit, given to prayer and study, and full of faith and the Holy Ghost. Wesley perceived in him qualifications for extensive usefulness in the boundless field of evangelical labor which was opening in the New World, and sent him hither in 1784, with Dr. Coke, having first ordained him a Presbyter. He thus shared in those solemn proceedings of the founder of Methodism, in 1784, which led to the organization of the Methodist Episcopal church in the United States. He attended the celebrated Christmas Conference, at which our present ecclesiastical polity was adopted, and, as a presbyter, assisted Coke in the ordination of Asbury, — the first Methodist ordination in the New World. His appointments, in this country, down to the date of his election to the episcopal office, were, from 1785 to 1790, Presiding Elder, in various sections of the Baltimore Conference; 1790, Philadelphia, exercising meanwhile the office of Presiding Elder over the adjacent circuits; 1791, New York; 1792, Baltimore; 1793, Presiding Elder in Baltimore Conference. In 1796, we miss his name in the Minutes, by a typographical error, doubtless, as it reäppears, the next year, among the list of Presiding Elders of the Baltimore Conference, which office he continued to sustain till his election to the episcopacy, at the General Conference, in 1800. Notwithstanding he was advanced in life when raised to this laborious

* Minutes, 1807.

position, he "magnified his office," say his fellow-laborers, "by travelling annually three or four thousand miles, through all the United States." *

These long journeys were mostly performed on horseback, and, to no small extent, on new and rough roads, along the frontier of the nation. His exertions contributed much to the growth of Methodism in this country. When he arrived, the church included about fifteen thousand members, and eighty-three preachers; when he fell, it was in the midst of more than one hundred and thirty thousand members, and more than four hundred and fifty preachers.

Having already spoken of his characteristics, as a man, a Christian, and a minister of the Gospel, we need not here remark upon them at length. "Holiness unto the Lord" was the great lesson of his discourses and of his example; and all who came within the sphere of his influence felt that a peculiar sanctity enveloped and glorified his person. Men took impressive notice that he "had been with Jesus," and that his daily walk was close on the margin of the spiritual world. When exhausted by travels and labors, and agonies of pain, his sainted spirit, strong and tranquil in God, still triumphed. "He was," write his brethren, "a prodigy of pain and patience, for thirteen weeks." He died, in full assurance of faith, July 5th, 1806, in Dover, Delaware. Asbury, receiving at a distance intelligence of his death, recorded the following emphatic testimony to his excellences: — "On my return, I found a letter from Dr. Chandler, declaring the death of Bishop Whatcoat, that father in Israel, and my faithful friend for forty years, — a man of solid parts, a self-denying man of God. Who ever heard him speak an idle word? When was guile found in his mouth? He had been thirty-eight years in the ministry, — sixteen years in England, Wales and Ireland, and twenty-two years in America; twelve years as Presiding Elder; four of this time he was stationed in the cities, or travelled with me, and six years in the superintendency. A man so uniformly good I have not known, in Europe or America. He had been afflicted with gravel and

* Minutes, 1807.

stone, in which afflictions, nevertheless, he travelled a great deal, — three thousand miles the last year. He bore, in the last three months, exceedingly painful illness, with most exemplary patience. He died in Dover, on the 5th of July, and his mortal remains were interred under the altar of the Wesleyan Dover church. At his taking leave of the South Carolina Conference, I thought his time was short. I changed my route to visit him, but only reached within a hundred and thirty miles: death was too quick for me." *

Asbury, heeding the calls of duty, pursued his route over the land; but, nearly a year after the death of his beloved colleague, went on a melancholy pilgrimage to his sepulchre, and preached over it a discourse on 2 Tim. 3: 10, — "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience." He remarked, "that he had known Richard Whatcoat from his own age of fourteen to sixty-two years, most intimately, and had tried him most accurately, in the soundness of his faith, in the doctrine of universal depravity, and the complete and general atonement; the insufficiency of either moral or ceremonial righteousness for justification, in opposition to faith alone in the merit and righteousness of Christ; the doctrine of regeneration and sanctification; his holy manner of life, — in duty at all times, in all places, and before all people, as a Christian, and as a minister; his long-suffering, — a man of great affliction of body and mind, having been exercised with severe diseases and great labors. But this did not abate his charity, his love of God and man, in all its effects, tempers, words and actions; bearing, with resignation and patience, great temptations, bodily labors, and inexpressible pain. In life and death placid and calm: as he lived, so he died."

But let us turn to the living workmen. The labors of the present year were not without encouraging results. Joshua Soule and Elijah Beale superintended an energetic band of Itinerants in Maine, among whom were Eleazer Wells, Samuel Hillman, Allen H. Cobb, Solomon Sias, Caleb Fogg, and others of similar character. Under their efforts, Methodism con-

* Journal, vol. III., p. 201.

tinued to extend. They added another circuit to their spacious field, and increased somewhat, though not greatly, the membership of its societies. Solomon Sias travelled Poland circuit. There was but little interest on the circuit, except at Harrison, where a revival commenced, under the following circumstances. Having arrived at the place of his appointment, a private house, he commenced the services, and took for his text the words of the prophet, Amos 4: 12, — "Prepare to meet thy God." At the beginning of the discourse, he had "much liberty in speaking. But, when about half through it, the tempter assailed him, and made him believe that his preaching was not acceptable, — that the people did not wish to hear him, — that he was doing no good, and had better conclude the meeting. He accordingly brought the service to a close as soon as he consistently could. When he knelt in prayer, a young man dropped on his knees near to him. He held a Class-meeting, and there found, to his great surprise, that the gentleman of the house had been converted under this very discourse; and the young man who knelt was his host's brother, and was awakened under the same sermon. The work of grace spread, and a goodly number were converted, and united in Christian fellowship."*

Brodhead had under his guidance a vigorous corps of Itinerants on the New Hampshire district, — Lewis Bates, Benjamin Bishop, Martin Ruter, &c. They returned 1706 members, and had gained during the year 441. Ebenezer F. Newell, not yet a member of the Conference, travelled Centre Harbor circuit, on this district, as colleague of Hezekiah Field, and witnessed good results of his labors, and not a few trials. "A door," he says,† "was opened in Conway, near Maine, where the Methodists were not known; I entered, and was kindly received by my Calvinist Baptist brethren. Several young people were deeply awakened. But, on my return in three weeks, my pleasing prospect of a revival was blasted! But few attended my meeting, and most of these were children, and all of them were unconverted persons."

A clergyman had discovered that he did not believe in repro-

* Letter to the writer. † Life and Observations.

bation, and the whole popular current was suddenly changed. Such was the tenacity of dogmatic opinions in that day. "In visiting the people they all appeared to shun me as an impostor! And it was the example and counsel of their preacher that had brought this change over the face of things. But, alas! alas! in a few short weeks, nine of those lovely, blooming youth, who were present at my first meeting and appeared deeply convicted of sin, were cut off and laid in the silent grave; and some of them died without hope! The one that was converted at my first meeting was among them, and died happy. But a door was opened in another part of the town, two or three miles distant; so I left this people with a heavy heart, for they seemed to me like those spoken of in Matt. 23: 13, who shut up the kingdom of God against men, and neither enter themselves nor suffer those who would to enter in. I entered the new opening, and my first text was John 1: 11, 12. The people turned in to hear me, and during the exercises there was an unusually severe thunder-shower. When I concluded my discourse, the rain was pouring down in such torrents that it prevented the people from leaving; so, after singing a hymn, I continued speaking on the subject of Christ's coming to judgment; the increasing tempest rendered the occasion doubly moving and awful! Flash succeeded flash, and peal followed peal, until, at length, one dazzling chain of blaze streamed down, attended by a tremendous roar of bursting thunder, which seemed to shake creation; the house trembled, and the affrighted people swayed as though they would fall from their seats. But I felt calm and safe in the hands of Him who maketh the pathway for the lightning, and my soul was happy. Praise God! I asked the people how they could bear the thoughts of the elements melting with fervent heat, the heavens passing away with a great noise, the resurrection of the dead, and the dreadful realities of the judgment day, if one peal of thunder and one flash of lightning so terrified them here! The power of God was felt; backsliders were reclaimed, and sinners awakened. A goodly number, twelve or fourteen, were so deeply convicted that they had no rest until

they obtained the witness that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven their sins."

"It was a blessed, a prosperous year," he adds. "By the power of God, victories were gained over sin, through conversions." On reaching one of his appointments, he was told that a number of men had come up from Fryeburg, threatening to carry that disturber of good order (as they called him) out of the place on a rail! "But," said the young men, "we are resolved to stand by you." A holy boldness filled his soul, and he thanked them, saying, "One who is stronger than all of you is here; pray to God, and all shall be well!" "My text," he says, "was Isa. 21: 11, 12, — 'Watchman, what of the night? &c.' Truth cut, — the way was clear, and a door was opened through which I passed even to Fryeburg, and preached to them in peace in their own town. Glory to God for success!"

One cause of hostility to these effective preachers was the extraordinary results which followed their labors; the prostration of their hearers as dead men, the liveliness (sometimes, perhaps, extreme) of their worship, and the zeal with which devoted women, as well as men, exhorted their neighbors to a religious life. One instance, which excited no little remark on this circuit, had a termination that could not fail to touch the hearts and close the mouths of scorners. It was that of a young lady who was subject to the inexplicable effects of religious emotion on the physical strength, to which we have often alluded, and who was especially faithful in her testimony for Christ among her neighbors. She was called to the test of death. "When told that she was dying, she began to shout and clap her hands, as she had been wont to do in meetings, until her strength failed; and, as long as a word could be understood, it was glory — glory!" One of the last sentences she uttered was, "*My Saviour unveils his lovely face, and it will never be hid from me again.*"

Such dying, after such living, vindicated the sincerity, if not the zeal, of these pious, but persecuted people. The earnestness of the religious sentiment is always sublime, even if it stops not always to regard conventional proprieties.

"Our last Quarterly meeting on this circuit," says Mr. Newell, "was full of interest. The people flocked in from all parts of it, — including eight towns, several of which had been taken in during the year. It was refreshing to hear the people declare what God had wrought for them and their neighbors. Parents had set up family worship, swearing had given place to praying, and many children had been converted to God. The people were united and happy, and the glory of God was overspreading many parts of the circuit."

Thomas Branch, and his evangelists on New London district, preached the word with great success. The membership of the district, as reported in the Minutes of the next year, is less than in the preceding returns; but this is owing to the detachment of several large circuits from it, and their incorporation into adjacent districts. Ebenezer Washburn travelled, the present year, the New London circuit, with Greenleaf R. Norris; they had trials, but were gladdened also with prosperity. Mr. Washburn says: "The circuit was large, and the plan that was given me contained twenty-eight regular appointments, including the cities of New London and Norwich. Its southern boundary was from Lyme, on the east bank of Connecticut river, to Westerly, in Rhode Island. The eastern bound was from Westerly, following the line which divides the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island, to Canterbury. The northern line extended from Canterbury, through Windham and Hebron, to Glastenbury, down the Connecticut to Lyme. Thomas Branch was Presiding Elder. We found some radicalism on the circuit. Abner Wood, who had charge of it the previous year, obtained new light, as he said, to renounce all church discipline, except the New Testament, as man-made and anti-Christian. He renounced infant baptism and the Christian Sabbath. Mr. Ostrander immediately called him before a committee of preachers, at Hebron, where he was suspended from all ministerial labors till the next annual Conference, and at the Conference he was expelled. The society at Windham was rent in sunder; something like twenty members left the church. In Glastenbury the peace and harmony of the society were disturbed for a season; but I believe it

was finally settled without the act of excision from the church. On the rest of the circuit the faith of the brethren was but little shaken, unless it was their faith in Abner Wood. On this circuit the Lord owned our labors, and gave us some seasons of revival in New London and Norwich; and at Quaker Hill there were considerable additions to the church. A brother Knowland had moved from New London into the town of Colchester, where there were no Methodists. Himself, his wife and daughter, were members at New London. He invited us to come and preach at his house. The first time I went there, the congregation filled the house, notwithstanding they had been sedulously warned, by the Congregational preacher, to keep away. I gave out for my text, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' John 5: 6. The Lord helped me to explain the moral depravity of fallen man, and then to point my hearers to 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,' as the only physician who could make them whole, and then to show them that it depended on the will of the creature whether he would be made whole or not. There was much weeping in the congregation, and I trust the season will be remembered with joy in eternity. In two weeks, when Mr. Norris came there, he found a number of souls under powerful conviction, and two who had obtained justifying grace. That evening several found peace in believing, and a number more were awakened. When I went there again, I formed a Class, and appointed Knowland leader; and his wife and daughter entered with him right into the work, and were very useful in comforting the mourners, and strengthening and confirming the young converts. By the good hand of our God upon us, we raised a good society in that place. The Rev. Mr. C. fought us all he could in his congregation, and from house to house; but he never met us face to face. He sent to Norwich to get the celebrated David Austin to come and curse us for him; but when he came, he blessed us all together, and sharply reproved Mr. C. for his opposition to a people whom God so signally owned and blessed. There was an old lady, living not far distant from Brother Knowland's, who was converted through the instrumentality of the Rev. George Whitefield. She was turned of ninety

years of age, and had a posterity of over one hundred and twenty. She had confidently prayed and believed, during several years, that she should live to see a revival of religion in Colchester. When this revival commenced, and she saw her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and some of the fourth generation, coming around her to tell her what great things the Lord had done for them, she praised God aloud, said the promise of God was verified, and she was now ready to depart; and in the midst of the revival she died, triumphantly praising her covenant-keeping God. We met with but little opposition during this revival, except from the parochial priest; and that was overruled rather to our advantage than otherwise."

The denomination had prospered generally during the year. Its total membership was 144,599; its increase, 14,020. There were 516 Methodist preachers traversing the land. The aggregate membership of the New England Conference was 8325. There was an apparent decrease of 886; but this was owing to the fact that several large circuits, hitherto included in the New England Conference, were now reported in the returns of that of New York. Among these circuits were Granville, Mass., with nearly four hundred members; Litchfield, Ct., with more than four hundred; Whittingham, Vt., with nearly three hundred and fifty, and Middletown, Ct., with about three hundred. The most accurate estimate we can make of the membership in New England at this time renders it at 12,945, which gives a gain on the returns of the preceding year of 1200.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR 1807–8.

Asbury. — New York Conference. — Passage to Maine. — Waltham. — The New England Conference. — Characteristic Notes. — Finances. — Asbury *en route*.

In April, 1807, Bishop Asbury was again urging his way, in much weariness, towards New York. "Sick or well," he wrote, "I have my daily labors to perform. I am hindered from that solitary, close, meditative communion with God, I wish to enjoy. I move under great debility."

Yet the triumphant success of the cause for which he sacrificed himself cheered him, as he pressed along. "I found," he says, as he approached New York, "old grandfather Budd *worshipping, leaning upon the top of his staff, — halting, yet wrestling* like Jacob! Ah! we remember when *Israel was a child*; but now, *how goodly are thy tents, oh Jacob, and thy tabernacles, oh Israel!*"

On Saturday, May 2nd, he arrived at Coeyman's Patent, near Albany, where the New York Conference commenced its session the same day. He gives us the following brief notes of this session, and his journey to Boston: "Sabbath, 3, I preached once more on the subject of the death of our dear departed Brother Whatcoat. Saturday, 9, we concluded our labors. The preachers took their stations with the simple-heartedness of little children. I find two thousand and one added within the bounds of this Conference; eighteen preachers and three missionaries. We had much labor, and great peace; and although, from the badness of the weather, we came home every evening through damps and mud, I had more rest than I should have had, had we convened in a city. We had preaching every noon.

"*Vermont.* — Tuesday, 12, brought us through Salem; we

dined, talked and prayed at Ruput's: possibly God may save the tavern-keeper. We lodged at Branch's; here we also prayed, but there was a tavern bar: we left, and came to Mr. Hireton's; here the landlady wept and talked, but my faith for the poor woman was not strong. We came to Carpenter's, at Chittenden, and hearing that Z. Andrews' was a home for preachers, we turned aside to tarry for a night. Thursday, 14, we boldly engaged the Green Mountain, of which we had heard awful accounts. I match it with rude Clinch, or rough Alleghany. We found snow in the gap. A tree was lying across the path; in leading the carriage over, it upset, but sustained little damage. Having dined at Pittsfield, we took fresh courage, and proceeded on. When we came to White's river, we were obliged to lead the horses as they dragged the carriage up the heights, over rocks, logs, and cavings-in of the earth; arrived at the Narrows, we found that the bank had given way and slidden down. I proposed to work the carriage along over by hand, whilst Daniel Hitt * led the horses; he preferred my leading them: so on we went; but I was weak, and not enough attentive, perhaps, and the mare ran me upon a rock; up went the wheel, hanging balanced over a precipice of fifty feet, — rocks, trees and the river beneath us; I felt lame, by the mare's treading on my foot. We unhitched the beast, and righted the carriage, after unloading the baggage, and so got over the danger and difficulty. But never in my life have I been in such apparent danger. O Lord, thou hast saved man and beast! We gladly stopped in Royal-Town, at Brother Ayres'. I have been happy under great temptations and hard labor. In every house, tavern and private, I have prayed and talked; this is part of my mission. I have two hundred miles before me for the next week, — and can I accomplish this labor? What is impossible with me, is possible with God. Friday, 15, we came to Cox's, and next day I preached at Bernard, and had an open season. I ordained five Deacons, namely, Carpenter, Currier, Peck, Sterling and Perkins. On the Sabbath day I preached in the woods; my text was 1 Tim. 2: 15. It hailed, and in the afternoon snowed.

* Rev. D. Hitt was his travelling companion this year.

We had three discourses, in and out of the house, and held a Love Feast. The work revives in this town."

Notwithstanding these labors, he travelled forty miles the next day; and on Sunday, 9, he writes: "We crossed the mountains, and came into New Hampshire at Andover, and continued on, dining and praying at Salisbury, to Concord, forty miles. On Thursday, we kept on through Kennebunk, Saco and Scarboro', into Portland. I was unwell, — had travelled hard, rising at four o'clock every morning; yet I had to preach here at eight o'clock in the evening. God is here: Brother Bachelor's labors have been blest. I lodged with Major Ilsley, still our great friend. Saturday, 22, we lodged with Mr. Dearborn, in Monmouth. We count on having made two hundred and thirty miles this week, over *hard* roads in many senses. My work is for God — my reward from him. May I be made perfect, through Christian and ministerial trials and sufferings!"

On Sunday, 23, he preached at Monmouth, Me. "On Tuesday," he says, "I preached at Scarboro', at five o'clock in the evening, upon Heb. 3: 12—14. We sent forward the preachers to call a meeting in the town of Berwick, in the District of Maine. On Wednesday I preached to them, and the people were attentive. This is the beginning of Methodism in this place."

On Saturday, he reached the mansion of Bemis, at Waltham. Several preachers were there, on their route to the Boston Conference. He preached to them on Sunday. "My Bible," he writes, "and plans for Conference stations, occupied my mind, and became the devotions of the day."

On Monday, June 1st, he entered Boston, and opened, the next day, the session of the New England Conference. There were, he says, ninety-two preachers on the list. Besides probationers, there were present fifty-one Elders and Deacons, among whom were Pickering, Brodhead, Sabin, Soule, Beale, Hedding, Merwin, Webb, Kibby, Washburn, Munger, Ruter, Kent, Bates, Martin, Hillman and Branch. The latter served as secretary. The Conference sat till Saturday morning, and despatched a large amount of business. It adopted a vote that

no member should absent himself from the sessions, without express permission, under penalty of a fine. "It kept us busy," says Asbury, "to preach five times a day, ordain fifty-nine to office, and inquire and examine into characters, graces and gifts, and appoint the numerous stations. I preached on Wednesday, and an ordination sermon on Thursday. And must I walk through the seven Conferences, and travel six thousand miles, in ten months?"

The notes of the examination of character show the continued caution and frankness of the Conference. While some of the candidates are credited with their full claims to excellence, others are explicitly charged with their uncorrected defects. Some are pronounced "faithful, useful;" "good disciplinarians;" "very acceptable among the people, much admired;" "pious, established in doctrine and discipline;" "gifted, unspotted in character," &c. Others are reported as "stable amidst storms, but as rather favoring needless ornaments;" "not fond of discipline;" "too much disposed to preach about the millennium;" "zealous, eccentric;" "acceptable, unsteady;" "hypochondriacal, pious;" "of small abilities, pious, quite singular;" "not profitable, singular, absent in mind;" "married prematurely." These characteristic notes are not without relevancy in our narrative. It must be remembered that they were appended to the names of candidates only. Several of the present cases were discontinued. Eleven young men were admitted on trial, among whom were Joseph A. Merrill, Ebenezer Blake and Charles Virgin. The usual financial table is not given; we learn from Asbury, however, that after paying $824.50 on the deficiency, the Conference was nearly $3000 insolvent. Of the sum paid, $180 was received from the Chartered Fund; $300 from the Book Concern; $300, the Book Concern dividend of the Baltimore Conference, a gift from that body; and a further donation from it of $44.50. A vote of thanks for its liberality was adopted.

On Saturday, Asbury refreshed them by reading letters from Delaware and Virginia, giving accounts of remarkable revivals in those sections of the church. The business of the session

was then concluded, and "an hour or two was spent in conversing on the state of the Lord's work among the people under our charge, and our own souls," says the secretary. Asbury read the appointments, and these self-sacrificing men were, the same day, pursuing their way on horseback, — some in groups, some alone, — to their scattered posts of labor.

Asbury immediately departed for "the pleasant town of Lynn," where he preached on the Sabbath. On Monday he shook hands with his Waltham friends, but was *en route* the same day. On Tuesday, he reached Wilbraham, "in spite of heat and lameness." "I am in peace," he writes; "I dare not murmur, though in pain." On Tuesday, 12th, he was on Pittsfield circuit. "Methodism," he writes, "prevails in this quarter; in two societies two hundred members have been added." On Saturday, by "a great ride of forty miles," he entered the State of New York, "faint, sick and lame. My feet are much swelled, and I am on crutches; but I have been supported among strangers." Thus he pressed on his course over the continent, aged and debilitated, but advancing daily; preaching continually, in barns and private houses more than in chapels, and rejoicing at the triumphs of the truth. "What hath God wrought in America!" he exclaims, soon after leaving New England. "In thirty-six years we find one hundred and forty-four thousand five hundred and ninety in number. In England, after seventy-seven years, they count one hundred and fifty thousand nine hundred and seventy-four: they may have thirty millions of souls in the three kingdoms to labor amongst; and we, not more, perhaps, than five millions. Our travelling preachers, five hundred and thirty-six, at present; the rest, local and official, about fourteen hundred; but all these are poor men, and unlearned, — without books, money or influence. Not unto us, not unto us! — oh Lord, take thou the glory!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

PREACHERS, 1807–1808.

Appointments. — Charles Virgin. — Early Religious Experience. — Entrance into the Ministry. — Trials. — Anecdotes. — Appointments. — Lewis Pease. — Early Struggles. — Labors. — Death. — Joseph A. Merrill. — Appointments. — Character. — Ebenezer Blake. — Early Life. — True Glidden. — Quarterly Meeting. — Incidents. — Appointments.

THE New England Conference of 1807 made the following appointments:

BOSTON DISTRICT. John Brodhead, *Presiding Elder. Boston*, George Pickering, Daniel Webb; *Lynn*, Nehemiah Coye; *Marblehead*, Philip Munger; *Salisbury and Salem*, Joseph S. Merrill; *Harwich*, Joel Steele; *Scituate and Sandwich*, Thomas Asbury, Nathaniel W. Stearns; *Gloucester and Manchester*. Reuben Hubbard; *Poplin, Epping, and Sandown*, William Stevens; *Nantucket*, Alfred Metcalf; *New Bedford*, Epaphras Kibby; *Newport*, Samuel Merwin; *Warren and Bristol*, Joseph Snelling; *Rhode Island and Somerset*, Joshua Crowell; *Norton, Mansfield, and Easton*, Thomas Perry; *Portsmouth and Nottingham*, Martin Ruter.

NEW LONDON DISTRICT. Elijah R. Sabin, *Presiding Elder. Pomfret*, Ebenezer Washburn; *Tolland*, Hollis Sampson, G. R. Norris; *Ashburnham*, Asa Kent, Joseph Smith; *Needham*, Benjamin Hill, Isaac Scarrett; *Providence*, John Tinkham; *East Greenwich*, Pliny Brett; *New London*, Dan Perry, Theophilus Smith.

VERMONT DISTRICT. Thomas Branch, *Presiding Elder. Athens*, Caleb Dustin; *Wethersfield*, Clement Parker, Joseph Fairbank; *Barnard and Rochester*, Erastus Otis, Solomon Sias; *Vershire*, Benjamin F. Lambord; *Barre*, Samuel Thompson, Eleazar Wells; *Danville*, Luther Chamberlain; *Stanstead*, Levi Walker.

NEW HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT. Elijah Hedding, *Presiding Elder*. *Grantham*, Warren Bannister, Charles Virgin; *Hanover*, Dan Young; *Bridgewater*, Joseph Farrar; *Pembroke*, Hezekiah Field; *Tuftonboro'*, Joseph Peck, Ebenezer Blake; *Northfield*, Zachariah Gibson; *Centre Harbor*, Paul Dustin; *Landaff*, Dyer Burge; *Lunenburg*, John Green.

PORTLAND DISTRICT. Oliver Beale, *Presiding Elder*. *Bowdoinham*, John Wilkinson; *Portland*, Joel Winch; *Durham*, David Carr; *Scarboro'*, Lewis Bates; *Falmouth*, Samuel Hillman, John Patton; *Poland*, Jonathan Chaney, Enoch Jaques; *Bethel*, Allen H. Cobb; *Livermore*, Aaron Humphrey, Eli Howe; *Conway*, William Hunt.

KENNEBEC DISTRICT. Joshua Soule, *Presiding Elder*. *Readfield*, David Bachelor, Henry Martin; *Norridgewock*, Ebenezer Fairbank; *Hallowell*, Caleb Fogg; *Vassalboro'*, Joseph Baker; *Bristol*, James Young; *Union River*, Daniel Ricker; *Union*, Samuel Baker; *Orrington*, Philip Ayer; *Hampden*, David Stimson; *Vermont and New Hampshire*, Thomas Skeel, Missionary; *District of Maine*, John Williamson, Missionary.

Besides these, there were, under the jurisdiction of the New York Conference,

ASHGROVE DISTRICT. William Anson, *Presiding Elder*. *Cambridge*, Daniel Brumley and Francis Brown; *Vergennes*, Dexter Bates; *Grand Isle*, Nathaniel Gage; *Brandon*, George Powers and Lewis Pease; *Dunham*, Gershom Pease; *Fletcher*, Phineas Cook and Stephen Scornborger.

RHINEBECK DISTRICT. Peter Moriarty, *Presiding Elder*. *Granville*, Nathan Emery and Phineas Viel; *Litchfield*, Aaron Hunt and Jonathan Lyon; *Whittingham*, Andrew McKain and Major Curtis; *Pittsfield*, Noble W. Thomas and Eben Smith; *Buckland*, Laban Clark.

Also, on the New York district, under the Presiding Eldership of Joseph Crawford, were, *Redding*, James M. Smith and Zalmon Lyon; and *Middletown*, William Thatcher, R. Harris, and O. Sykes.

According to this list, there were in New England *eight* districts (including Ashgrove and Rhinebeck) and part of a ninth,

sixty-nine circuits, and *two* missions at large; and *one hundred and four* preachers, exclusive of the Presiding Elder of New York district, which comprised a large part of Connecticut. There was a gain of *five* circuits and *seven* preachers.

CHARLES VIRGIN joined the Itinerant ranks the present year. He was born in Hopkinton, N. H., May 8th, 1787. His parents trained him in the rigid Puritan education of the times. In 1800 they removed to Maine. In the fall of that year death entered the family, and Joseph Baker, who was then travelling Bethel circuit, was called to perform the funeral services. The Methodist Itinerants scattered the good seed everywhere, in conversation as well as from the pulpit, on the tilled ground or by the road-side. As Mr. Baker, already on his horse, was leaving the family, he called young Virgin to him very affectionately, and said, — "'My young friend, do you ever think of dying?' — I answered that I did," writes Mr. Virgin. — "'Well,' said he, 'remember that you are a sinner, born to die; and you must pray God to forgive your sins, and prepare you for death.' These few words entered my inmost soul. Sleeping or waking, at home or abroad, at work or recreation, they were constantly sounding in my ears. 'You are a sinner, and you must remember it.' Well, thought I, my parents always taught me that I was a sinner; but everybody is a sinner. This I was taught by my parents, and the minister I used to hear in Concord, and by the Assembly's Catechism, which the children had to learn in the schools. From my earliest remembrance I was afraid of death, yet supposed we could not be Christians until we got to be old; and at that time I had not seen any one under the age of thirty or forty years who was a Christian. I had none to open my mind to; I read the Bible, but it only served to heighten my distress. I was guilty and condemned, and I strove hard to live better; but all the time I was afraid to go to my heavenly Father with such a load of guilt. In the midst of my distress, my dear parents experienced religion, and set up the family altar, and began to care for their children more than ever before. But the enemy suggested that they were old enough to have religion; — you are too young; there is time enough for you to be

good when you are older; and Calvinist ministers preached that it was vain for persons to pray until they were good, or converted. In this distressed condition, I continued to weep and mourn until February, all the time resolving to pray as soon as I was good enough. Early in February my parents left home for an evening lecture, three miles distant. I, being the oldest child, was left with the others. As soon as possible, I put them to bed, and got them to sleep, lest they should be frightened to be left alone, as there was but one house within a mile, and the next was over two miles distant. As soon as they were sound in sleep, I left the house, with all possible stillness, about eight o'clock in the evening, and retired to the field, trembling and weeping as I went. My sins pressed me to the earth; I knew not what I could say. But when I was at a convenient distance from the house, I fell on my knees before the throne of grace, confessed my sins, and prayed God, for Christ's sake, to have mercy on my soul. I resolved for God to live and die; and if I perished, I would perish at the feet of mercy. I continued some time on my knees; and though the cold was severe, the distress of mind was so great that I was lost to everything but the salvation of my soul. While on my knees my distress and anguish mysteriously left me; and when I arose, I said to myself, 'What is this? I am relieved, I am blessed, I am happy.' All around, above, and beneath, conspired to praise God; and I went to the house feeling resolved to glorify God while I should live. This was in February, 1801, and for two years and a half I continued to enjoy a sense of the pardoning mercy of God." *

He heard preaching but once in three weeks on the remote Bethel circuit, and was not taken immediately under the watch-care of the church, "as I ought to have been," he writes, "and, with the least encouragement, should have rejoiced to have been." Under these circumstances, he gradually declined, in the course of two or three years, from his spiritual watchfulness, and, though he never totally lost his interest in religion, he lost its vitality and enjoyment. The death of a beloved sister was instrumental in reclaiming him. "The evening after the

*Letter to the author.

funeral, I fell," he writes, "on my knees with inexpressible anguish, for my neglects of duty. All I dared to say was, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' I slept none that night. At the next meeting I arose before the whole assembly, and made known, with streaming eyes, my past experience and declension, and my resolution to return fully to my gracious Redeemer." He continued in deep anxiety till December 1st, when, in the public congregation, the peaceful "witness of the Spirit" was restored to him. It was an era in his life. "In an instant," he says, "my burden was gone, and I felt that God, for Christ's sake, did restore to me the joy of his salvation. By grace, through faith, I was justified and accepted of God. I wept, and all present wept; and the power of the Highest filled the place in which we were assembled — a day long to be remembered by many. I went on my way rejoicing, endeavoring to discharge every duty in the fear of God."

He now joined the church, and pursued his pilgrimage with success and comfort. We pass over an interval in his subsequent course, and come to the period of his entrance into the ministry. No slight inward struggles, and no little discouragement from without, attended this important crisis of his history. "I felt it," he says, "to be my duty to call sinners to flee the wrath to come. The impression was very vivid and strong, and the inward voice was very distinct; the place, and the exact time, with all its connected circumstances, are still fresh in my recollection. When I yielded to this impression, my peace flowed evenly on; but the moment I began to reason, or excuse myself, my enjoyments were invariably interrupted. After a while I ventured to open my mind to our preacher; but he plainly told me that all persons who experienced religion had such impressions, and that many old women thought that they were called to preach; and advised me to banish such thoughts from my mind. But, although I got no help from my pastor, I was kept from feeling any hardness towards him. The inward conflicts that followed, no pen can describe. It was of the Lord's mercies that I did not faint, for the enemy now came in like a flood, saying that all my inward impressions were a decep-

tion, both about preaching and religion; and had it not been the case that I enjoyed an abiding witness of the Holy Spirit that I was a child of God, I should have sunk in deep waters. I resolved, through grace, to commit my case to God. In earnest prayer and weekly fasting, I did so, to my great comfort; and the Lord confirmed me in the belief that it was my duty to warn sinners of their danger. After a number of weeks, I set out to go round the circuit with the preacher, and improve my gift the best way that I could. But, after passing one Sabbath with him, he told me I had better go home, and banish from my mind all such thoughts, for I was certainly deceived. O! what an opportunity my dear pastor had of giving direction to a mind sincerely desirous to know the will of God! And what a scene of conflicts, for a year or more, it might have saved me from! But my heavenly Father was preparing me to deal with persons under similar exercises, and to advise and comfort them in their conflicts. Numbers of whom I now think, who are burning and shining lights in the world, I have, in my feeble way, endeavored to sympathize with, and to bear with their weaknesses, and to help them forward in the work of the Lord."

These extracts are impressively suggestive. How nearly did the church, in this instance, lose one of its most faithful laborers and most unblemished and honored veterans! The next circuit preacher appreciated better the struggle which was agitating the mind of the youthful disciple. He was a man of like experience, and, on hearing young Virgin's story, related, with reciprocal sympathy, his own, and, exhorting him to be of good courage in the Lord, took him out with him on the circuit. His fetters were broken; he had "encouragement and success in preaching;" he returned home to earn money for his equipment with horse and saddle-bags, and then took the field, where for thirty-three years he continued as worthy and devoted a laborer as our annals record. He was first sent by the Presiding Elder, Oliver Beale, to Durham circuit, where he had the invaluable counsels and sympathies of Timothy Merritt, who was located at the time within its limits. In 1807 he was received on trial by the New England Conference, and sent to New Grantham circuit, N. H.;

but in a few weeks Elijah Hedding, his Presiding Elder, directed him to take charge of Lunenburg circuit, which lay in the upper part of Vermont, and reached into Canada. "It was distant," he writes, "more than a hundred miles, and I was an utter stranger in the country. The preacher who had been appointed there was sick. The conflict of my spirit, for a while, was indescribable; but I had put my hand to the plough, and dared not look back. To take charge of a circuit, I could not think of but with great trembling. I had just performed a journey of one hundred and eighty miles, and my funds were nearly out."

He had but one dollar, and this was all immediately spent in getting his horse shoed. "I had promised," he continues, "to put up that night at Deacon Sanborn's, of precious memory, in Unity. It was a sleepless night. I prayed and wept, and wept and prayed, until the dawn of day. After breakfast and family prayer, I mounted my horse to go. In the family were three children, holy members of the M. E. church, by the names of I——, D——and N——, — one son and two daughters. They stood upon the door-steps. As I came to the first, who was the son, and took my leave of him, he put a silver dollar into my hand. I next came to D——, she put another into my hand; and N——, she gave me the third. I was too much affected to speak. I turned away and got out of hearing as soon as possible, and then wept profusely, and, praying to God to forgive me, resolved never again to distrust my Heavenly Father."

In 1808, he was appointed to Stanstead circuit, which was mostly in Canada, but extended into Vermont. "It was," he says, "at that time, called by some the college of the New England Conference. It was on Vermont district, of which Thomas Branch was Presiding Elder, — a holy man, a good preacher, always exact in redeeming time, — one of the best Presiding Elders I was ever favored with. His history ought to be preserved. I set out for my circuit with a heavy heart, — crossed the Thirty Mile Woods, where there was no house for over thirty miles, — came very near losing my horse, by getting mired, — fed him on the 'Lord's meadow', — ate my dinner under the shadow of a large rock, from my saddle-bags, about midway

of my journey, — knelt down, and prayed earnestly to God to accompany me on my course, and then went on my way rejoicing. The first house I came to belonged to a Methodist family, who made me welcome to their hospitalities. I arrived the next day at Brother Rix's, the head-quarters of the circuit in Stanstead, Lower Canada. It was a three-weeks' circuit, — bad roads long rides, and hard fare. The people had very warm hearts and willing minds, but they were poor; and it was a luxury to labor and suffer among them. There were deep snows, and extreme cold. I froze myself three times that winter, and suffered greatly. My clothes were nearly worn out, being mostly what my dear mother made with her own hands, and fitted me out with, when I left home for Durham circuit."

Such was the beginning of his Itinerant career. The remainder of his ministerial life was full of incidents of adventure and success; but we must pass over them. His subsequent appointments were, in 1809, Livermore, Me.; 1810, Conway, N. H.; 1811, New Grantham, N. H.; 1812, Kennebec district, Me.; 1813, Boston district, which he superintended four years; it extended from "Portsmouth, N. H., to Sandown and New Salem circuit; thence into Massachusetts to Mansfield, Easton, New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, all Cape Cod, and back to Boston and Portsmouth." In 1818, on account of his prostrated health, he was left, at his own request, without an appointment. In 1819, he was sent to Portland, Me.; 1820 and 1821, Bath, Me.; 1822, Hallowell, Me., on which circuit two hundred persons were converted during the year. The next year he was returned superannuated; but, in 1824 and 1825, he was appointed to Easton and Stoughton, Mass.; 1826, Somerset and Fall River, Mass.; 1827, Bristol, R. I.; 1828 and 1829, Milford and Hopkinton, Mass.; 1830, Southbridge, Mass.; 1831, East Greenwich, R. I.; 1832 and 1833, Thompson and Eastford, Conn.; 1834, Needham, Mass.; 1835, Marlboro' and Harvard, Mass.; 1836 and 1837, Lunenburg, Mass.; 1838, Ludlow, Mass.; 1839, South Wilbraham, Monson, and Wales, Mass. Such is the list of his appointments; it speaks significantly of his labors and travels in the cause of his Divine Master. At the last sta-

tion, he was attacked with pulmonary disease, which has since disabled him from public labors. He now lingers at Wilbraham, in patient suffering, and comfortable hope of entering into the rest whither most of his early Itinerant associates have gone. "I owe my all," he says, "under God, to the Methodist church. I have always loved its doctrines and discipline. Out of ten who were received at Boston, 1807, only three of us have lived to these days. Last year Brother J. A Merrill left us. Brother E. Blake and my poor self still linger on the shores of time. I have enjoyed the direct witness of the Spirit ever since I united with the M. E. church. I never have had a difficulty with any of my brethren the preachers. I have endeavored to love God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself, for many years; and I have no purpose but to find my way to heaven. I have, in thirty years of hard labor, seen a great number converted to God, and happily joined to the church. I have lived to see the church grow powerful. Willingly would I labor and suffer still in the ranks with my dear brethren, if I was able."

Mr. Virgin is in person tall and erect; his countenance is expressive of repose and benevolence, and his head is hoary with age and affliction. He has been distinguished by devotion to his ministerial duties, by usefulness, the sympathetic kindliness of his disposition, and the unspotted purity of his long public life.

Lewis Pease was one of the notable men of our primitive ministry. He was born in Canaan, N. Y., August 7th, 1786, and was early the subject of religious impressions; but, like many others whose lives we have sketched, he suffered greatly from the theological errors of his religious education. He feared that he was reprobated by the fore-ordination of God; and so intense became his anguish, that he was strongly tempted to commit suicide. The awakened mind thus seizes with avidity on every means of self-condemnation and despondence; but God will not despise the broken and contrite heart. The very anxiety of such a mind is proof of the saving influence of the Holy Spirit. The Methodist Itinerants brought to the young penitent the proclamation, that "the Spirit and the bride say

come; and let him that heareth say come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." In a prayer-meeting, the date of which he remembered with a grateful heart (30th of January, 1805), his captive spirit was liberated, and "soon after, in the town of Cornwall, his doubts and fears were entirely removed, and he obtained a clear witness of his acceptance with God."*

His new experience was quickly tested on a bed of dangerous sickness; but he triumphed over the fear of death, and "desired to depart and be with Christ." During this interval of affliction, he first received the impression that it was his duty to preach the Gospel. He was raised up and made a witness for Christ, through nearly forty years. He was licensed as a local preacher in 1806, and the next year was received as a probationer at the New York Conference, and appointed to Brandon circuit, Vt. In 1808 he travelled Cambridge circuit, N. Y., and at the close of the year was admitted to Deacon's orders. In 1809 he travelled Buckland, Mass., and in 1810, Pownall circuit, Vt. In 1811 he was ordained Elder, and appointed to the city of Albany. In 1812 and 1813 he was stationed in Brooklyn, L. I.; but in June of the latter year his health failed. He suffered from bleeding at the lungs, which continued almost daily for fifteen months. In 1814 and 1815 he received a superannuated relation. In 1816 he was appointed to Pittsfield circuit, Mass.; but, after travelling two or three months, his health again failed; and in 1817 and 1818 he was superannuated. In 1819 and 1820 he was appointed to Otis, Mass. In 1821 and 1822 he was again stationed in Brooklyn, where his labors were abundantly blessed. A revival of religion commenced in August of the first year, and continued till the close of the last; and two hundred souls were added to the church. In 1823 and 1824 he was stationed in Hartford, Conn., and in 1825 and 1826, at the Union church, Philadelphia. In 1827 and 1828 he was appointed to Champlain district, N. Y. At the close of the first year, he attended the General Conference at Pittsburg; and the next March, he was again attacked with bleeding at the lungs, and obliged to

* Minutes, 1843-4.

retire from his district. In 1829 he received a supernumerary relation, and was attached to Lee and Lenox circuit, Mass.; and in 1830 and 1831 he was stationed in the city of New York. His health becoming more feeble, he took a supernumerary relation in 1832, which was continued in 1833, 1834 and 1835. In September, 1835, he commenced his labors as chaplain to the New York city hospital, and continued in that institution the ensuing year. In 1837, 1838, 1839 and 1840, he was appointed supernumerary to Richmond, N. Y. In 1841, 1842, and 1843, he was superannuated, and continued to reside in Richmond. He was not idle during these years of infirmity and decline, but labored in the cause of God as much as his health would allow.

Thus did this devoted man labor in the vineyard of his Lord, though oppressed with infirmities which would, to most men, have been a sufficient excuse for retirement and repose. In 1843 he was called to supply the place of a disabled preacher at Troy, N. Y. He preached there with remarkable power and effect. An extensive revival followed, and more than two hundred souls were added to the church in a few months. "But those were the last labors of his life, and the last trophies he was to win for Christ." His infirmities increased, and he was compelled to retreat to his home, and to "put his house in order;" for the time of his departure was at hand. "His principal disease was scrofula, seated upon the lungs, stomach and other internal organs, which were greatly impaired, or almost destroyed, by ulcers. Months of pain were meted out to him. His sufferings were great, — almost beyond human endurance; but he was wonderfully supported by the power of Divine grace. The good Shepherd was near to attend him through the valley of the shadow of death; and on the borders of the grave, he was happy in prayer, and in singing praises to God. A friend was charged to bring this message from his dying lips: 'Tell the Conference that I died in the full faith of the Gospel, as taught by the Methodists; — yes! tell the bishops, the elders and the preachers, I love them, and I love the discipline, and all the ordinances and articles of faith it contains; — yes! tell them I die in peace with all the members.' When his

speech had failed, he gave his weeping wife a silent token that all was well. Soon after, he fell asleep in Jesus, without a motion or a struggle, on the 5th of September, in the fifty-eighth year of his age."

Lewis Pease was much beloved and venerated among his brethren. He applied himself to his studies, and was a workman that needed not to be ashamed. His manner, in the pulpit, was simple, but solemn and powerful, and often pathetic. He was always acceptable. "By his labors," say his ministerial brethren, "many souls were converted to God, who will rise up in the great day, and call him blessed."

Joseph A. Merrill was born in Newbury, Mass., Nov. 22, 1785. He was converted to God when about nineteen years of age. Being subsequently licensed as a local preacher, he was sent by Elijah R. Sabin to St. Francis' river, Lower Canada, where he had a thorough trial of the hardships of the Methodist Itinerancy. At the session of the New England Conference for the present year, he was received into the travelling connection, and appointed to Salisbury and Salem, Mass, Of his subsequent appointments the obituary of the New England Conference gives the following outline: "The next year he was appointed to Scituate, Mass., and there his labors were blessed with a powerful revival of the work of God. He was then stationed successively for two years at Harwich, one at Wellfleet, and one at Falmouth, on Cape Cod, in each of which places he labored with much success in bringing souls to Christ; and several yet linger in those places as pillars in the church, who were converted through his instrumentality. For the next two years, 1813–14, he was stationed, with Rev. George Pickering, in Boston, where, in addition to the labors of his regular charge, he acted as chaplain to a regiment of soldiers then stationed in that city; and in the multiplicity of his labors and anxieties, his physical strength was exhausted, and he, with his faithful companion, seemed to be near the grave; but God, in mercy, raised them up, and he continued his labors. During the next four years he was Presiding Elder of Vermont district, where his labors were incessant, arduous and efficient. In 1819 he acted

in the twofold capacity of agent for the Wesleyan Academy at Newmarket, and the first missionary of the first Missionary Society in our church, which was formed by the Lynn Common church. His field of missionary labor was in the north of New Hampshire. As agent for the academy, he was eminently successful. During the next two years he was stationed at Newmarket, and for the succeeding four years was Presiding Elder of the New London district. These were years of great prosperity in that field of labor. In connection with others, about this time, he succeeded in the removal of the Wesleyan Seminary from Newmarket to Wilbraham, where its prospects for success were far more favorable. The next two years, 1826–7, he labored in Boston, and the two following, on the Wood End station, in Lynn. In these appointments he labored with great success and acceptance. From 1830 to 1833, he was Presiding Elder of the Providence district, and in 1833 was agent for the Conference, and preached a part of the year in Worcester, Mass., being the first who preached our doctrines in that city. From 1834 to 1838 he was Presiding Elder of the Springfield district, and the two following years was stationed at Webster, and the succeeding year at Williamsburg. In the former part of the next year he labored at St. Paul's church, in Lowell, and in the latter part of the year he removed to Newton, Upper Falls, where his labors were blessed in the conversion of many souls. In 1843 he was stationed in Salem; 1844–5, at East Boston; 1846–7, at East Cambridge. In 1848 he was appointed to Newburyport, amidst the scenes of his nativity and early ministry. On going to this place, he remarked, 'Here I commenced my labors as a minister; and I know not but Providence has sent me here to finish them.' And thus it was. Toward the close of the year his health rapidly declined, and medical skill seemed incompetent to arrest the progress of the disease. At the session of the Conference, of which he had been an active and efficient member for forty-two years, he once more appeared, but not as he was wont to appear. He was pale and emaciated. That hitherto strong and clear voice now trembled with weakness. When his name was called in the exam-

inations of Elders, he arose from his seat, and, while every eye was fixed upon his faded form, in deep and mournful interest, he, with emotions that can never be described, referred to his long and pleasant connection with his brethren, — his love, his increasing love for them, and for the work in which he, with them, had been engaged; he pronounced upon them his blessing, and, while emotion choked his utterance, he threw himself into the hands of his brethren. He was returned in a superannuated relation, and retired to a little home his foresight and economy had provided, at Wilbraham. This was the first change in his relation to the Conference: he had always, by the blessing of God, been efficient, and this rendered the scene one of peculiar interest. But he had not long to remain in his earthly home. His health rapidly declined, till, on Sabbath morning, the 22d of July, 1849, he closed his eyes in death, and slept in Jesus."

Mr. Merrill possessed more than ordinary abilities as a preacher, and was distinguished by his practical skill and rare sagacity in ecclesiastical affairs. He had talents which would have fitted him for the most critical diplomatic responsibilities.

He was unwaveringly devoted to the great interests of the church, and exerted an important agency in the promotion of its educational plans. He was a trustee of the Wesleyan Academy of the New England Conference, and of the Wesleyan University, from their origin till his death. He was a chief actor in the anti-slavery conflict of the church, and has identified his name with that important movement. When other and strong men, driven by the stress of public agitations, abandoned the church, he stood firm in his adhesion to its uncertain fortunes; and lived to see the turbulence of the storm subside, and the principles he advocated generally established in the northern portion of the denomination. "He loved," say his brethren of the New England Conference, "the church and its institutions, his country and its government, the young, and especially the young in the ministry; he loved all, and labored through his active life for the good of all. In the domestic relations of life, he was peculiarly and deservedly endeared. His end was peace,

— yea, it was more, it was triumph, — and he, though dead, yet speaketh."

Ebenezer Blake commenced his ministerial travels the present year. He was born in Durham, Cumberland County, Maine, April 27, 1786. Living in a new and remote part of the country, his opportunities of education, and his religious privileges, were very limited; yet, "when quite young," he writes, "the Spirit of God often strove with me, and I felt that I ought to have religion, and sometimes tried to pray. I recall one instance, that occurred when I was about fourteen years of age. Death appeared very near to me: I supposed that I was dying, and an awful sense of my situation burst upon my mind; I expected to be in hell in a few minutes. Were it in my power to describe the horror of mind I then felt, men would not wonder that I sometimes proclaim the terrors of the Lord. Notwithstanding this, I was a wild youth; but, in my eighteenth year, I had the happiness to find the pearl of great price, through the instrumentality of the Methodists. Asa Heath was the first Methodist preacher that I ever heard; and the first time that I heard him, the word reached my heart, and I deeply felt the importance of religion. James Lewis, a local preacher from Gorham, was the second preacher that I heard, — a powerful speaker, who still lives to bless the church. A young man by the name of True Glidden, I think, was the third that I had the opportunity to hear. Mr. Glidden travelled Bowdoinham circuit, and had an appointment in Durham. Through the instrumentality of these good men, with others, God was pleased to pour out his Spirit in a wonderful manner; many souls were converted, and a good society was raised up. The powers of darkness raged, but the work of God went on. Glidden was one of the best young men that I ever knew. I have often observed him when in prayer in the congregation, the tears rolling from his eyes and dropping from his face. He literally wore himself out in less than three years, and descended to an early grave. He died of consumption, in the fall of 1806, and was buried in Chester, N. H., where not a stone remains to tell his resting-place. Thank God! in that day when Christ shall come

to make up his jewels, True Glidden will be among them, and will shine with no ordinary lustre. After some time, my mind became deeply impressed with a sense of the lost condition of man. I used sometimes to try to speak a word for my master. The first time that I attempted to exhort was at a Quarterly Meeting in Hebron. Joshua Taylor had just closed a good warm sermon. I tried to speak a few words, and the Lord in mercy sent them home to the heart of a young man, who, soon after, found peace. My mind became deeply exercised about preaching. I resisted the impressions until I sunk into a gloomy state. I recollect the first Quarterly Meeting that I attended; — it was held in a grove. Timothy Merritt stood in a cart and preached in the forenoon, from 'By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small.' I never heard Merritt preach, but in one instance, as he did at that Quarterly Meeting. After he closed, D. Dudley exhorted, and J. Lewis prayed; the people fell to the ground, and there was a cry of prayer in every direction through the congregation. The preachers and brethren spent the afternoon in praying for mourners. Twenty or more were converted at that meeting. One woman said it was all the work of Satan, and she would stay no longer there; she mounted her horse and rode a quarter of a mile, when she also was overpowered; she fell from her horse to the road, as if dead. She was carried into a house, and when she could speak, they found that she was under conviction. They prayed for her, and she soon found the Lord." *

Mr. Blake's interest was intensely kindled by the extraordinary scenes around him, and in the fall of 1806 he came to the conclusion that he could endure no longer the state of mind that he had been suffering. He gave himself to the work of the ministry, and was sent by his Presiding Elder to Poland circuit, for a few weeks. He then travelled on Falmouth circuit through the winter, and in April, 1807, was admitted on trial into the New England Conference, and stationed on Tuftenboro' circuit, N. H. "The circuit was large," he writes; "we had hard work, poor fare, but a glorious reformation. At Rochester, we formed a

* Letter to the author.

new society, which has prospered until the present time. In six months we admitted into the societies one hundred and twenty persons. I received less than thirty dollars for my support. I suffered greatly for the want of clothes, but was happy while I saw souls coming home to the Saviour." His subsequent appointments were Lunenburg circuit, N. H., Canaan, N. H., where seventy or more were converted; in 1810, Falmouth; 1811, Bethel; 1812, Durham; 1813, Scarboro', all in Maine. "The last," he writes, "was a year of blessed revivals!" In Kennebunkport we formed a society that has prospered, and is now a station of some importance in the Maine Conference." In 1814 and 1815 he travelled Poplin circuit; 1816, New London circuit, "where we were favored," he writes, "with the most powerful revival, in the city of New London, that I ever witnessed. In a population of some three thousand, there were between four and five hundred hopefully converted. We had frequently quite a number converted in a meeting. The work was so powerful that persons at labor in their shops would become so distressed in mind as to send out for the brethren to come in and pray with them. There were a number converted under such circumstances." He afterwards spent two years on Pomfret, and two on Tolland circuit, Ct. "On the latter," he writes, "we were favored with a revival in Wilbraham, in which twenty or thirty souls professed religion. In East Hartford or Manchester, we had a reformation, in which one hundred and forty made a profession of religion, and one hundred joined the Methodists."

Mr. Blake's appointments have since been numerous, and in all parts of New England. He possesses robust health, and has therefore been able to labor mightily in the church. Many gracious revivals have attended his ministry, and hundreds in the church and in heaven owe their salvation to his instrumentality. After nearly forty years' ministerial travels, he still continues in the Itinerant field, laboring with staunch energy, and an ardent attachment to the cause for which he has endeavored and endured so much. "I have never," he says, "been confined to the house a week at a time, through the whole of my ministry, but in one instance, and then for eight or ten days. I still enjoy

a tolerable state of health. It has been a great trial to me to see preachers raised up among us, and desert their work. I can safely say, that I have never seen the day that I would give up the situation of a Methodist preacher for any station in the gift of man."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

RESULTS.

Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont Districts. — Sanctification. — Ebenezer F. Newell. — Boston. — Bristol. — Newport. — Warren. — New London District. — Statistics.

The Conference year of 1807–8 included but little more than ten months. It was attended, however, with appreciable results. The Itinerants in Maine, under the superintendency of Joshua Soule and Oliver Beale, prosecuted their ministerial work, and bore their privations courageously, and reported an increase of nearly three hundred members. Hedding guided the labors of eleven men on the New Hampshire district. They had some success, but severe trials, hard work, difficult travelling, small pay, and no little hostility from other sects, as well as from ungodly men. The Vermont district, under the superintendence of Thomas Branch, advanced in prosperity. The doctrine of entire sanctification was preached, with especial power, by that holy man, and many living witnesses of it were raised up. Solomon Sias, who was on Barnard and Rochester circuit, says: "There were many most excellent members on this circuit. Many professed to have experienced the blessing of sanctification, whose daily walk gave evidence to the fact that their profession was well grounded. I have often seen several at a time fall to the floor, under the power of God; and frequently their countenances would seem to shine with the glory of God. The first Methodist meeting-house on the circuit was erected in Barnard, the present year." *

Ebenezer F. Newell toiled and suffered on Landaff circuit, extending his excursions even into Canada; but with no great

* Letter to the author.

success. He reported a numerical declension. Fatigued with labors, and burdened, yet hopeful, in spirit, the young evangelist wound his way through the "Notch" of the White Mountains, on his route to the approaching Conference. Weighty thoughts pressed upon his weary spirit, as he took leave of his laborious circuit, — thoughts with which the self-sacrificing evangelists of that day must often have consoled and strengthened their hearts. "God knoweth all things," he said to himself; "God knoweth all things, even the thoughts and intents of the heart, and will render to all their due. However much virtue and piety may be despised and trodden under foot by ignorance and pride here, and honor and crowns be assumed and worn undeserved in this world, the day is coming, — yea, is fast approaching, — when a never-fading crown of life shall adorn the brow of the saint in the everlasting kingdom of God, whilst vice, impiety, and hypocrisy, shall sink, covered with shame and everlasting contempt."

The Boston district, under Brodhead, enjoyed unusual prosperity, and Webb and Pickering labored in the metropolis, with special success. The former writes: "Pickering and I went to our work with one heart, and hand in hand. He was foremost in every good work, and I endeavored to follow on. We were cordially received, after a few weeks. The Lord blessed our labors, and many souls were brought to the knowledge of the truth, — considerably over one hundred, I believe. Our brethren in the ministry, T. C. Pierce and J. W. Tucker, were converted this year. The church was in debt three or four hundred dollars towards the expenses of the last year. One of the stewards said to us, 'If we are as well off at the close of this year as we are now, I think we shall do well.' Said Br. Pickering, 'If you are not out of debt at the close of the year, I think you will do badly.' By the blessing of God on the means that were used, the debt, and all the expenses of the current year, were paid; and, as a society, at the conclusion of the year, they owed nothing."

Snelling enjoyed continued success in Bristol, and Warren circuit, where, during two years, he had witnessed the advancement of the church. He extended his labors from Somerset to Newport. "The reformation" he writes, "still went on, and

many were anxiously inquiring what they should do to be saved. The congregations were large; sometimes, on Sabbath, more than a thousand people attended. In Bristol we had an excellent choir of singers; it was thought to be the best in Boston district. The greater part of them professed religion. The gifts in the church also were as great as in any place that I ever preached in. Several of our brethren were masters of vessels; these would exhort and pray and comment on the Scriptures, in a remarkable manner. During my labors in Bristol, the Lord added to the church a goodly number; and I hope to meet them where they that sow and they that reap shall rejoice together. I preached also in Newport, R. I., when Methodism there was in its infancy. Captain Beal, who commanded Fort Adams and Fort Wolcott, was a member of the Methodist church. I frequently visited him at each fort, and found him to be an excellent man, with an amiable family. He used to have all his soldiers attend meeting on the Sabbath. They would march to meeting in regular order, dressed in uniform; and when meeting was done, return in the same manner. There was a Methodist society in Warren, which was one of the oldest in the State of Rhode Island. There was a good meeting-house, which was generally well filled, and considerable attention was paid to religion. Several were baptized, and joined the church."

New London district, under the Presiding Eldership of Elijah R. Sabin, was blessed with several local revivals, though no very large aggregate gain was reported. In Pomfret and Killingly "the Lord gave us," says Washburn, "a good revival, from which were raised up two eminently useful preachers, George Gary, and Benjamin Sabine. The circuit was large — the Methodists few and mostly poor; but they were rich in faith, and loved the church."

The returns of the New England Conference, at the end of the ecclesiastical year, amounted to 8825; there had been a gain of 500. Add the returns from the New England appointments of the New York Conference, and the aggregate amounts to 13,830. The aggregate increase for the year was little short of 900. The total membership of the denomination, including

Canada, was 151,995, and the total gain of the past year, 7405. The church, in all parts of the land, began to be self-conscious of its numerical force, of its great responsibilities, and the illimitable destinies which were dawning upon it.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

EARLY METHODIST CHURCHES IN CONNECTICUT.

Lee's Visit to New London. — Second Visit. — Asbury's Visit. — Organization of the First Class. — Its Members. — The First New London Conference. — The First Chapel erected. — Second Conference. — Great Revival. — Erection of the New Chapel. — Trials and Prosperity. — Secession. — Deliverance. — New Haven. — Lee's Visits. — Chapels. — Trials. — Success. — Thompson. — Early Methodist Preaching. — First Class. — Sarah Bugbee. — Conference. — First Chapel. — Improvements. — Elijah Nichols.

We have recorded, in our former volume, the history of several early Methodist churches in Connecticut; a few of the most important primitive localities of our cause in that state remain to be noticed. The church in New London is an example of the severe struggles and final success which so generally characterized our early societies in New England. Lee visited that city, for the first time, on the 2d of September, 1789. He was hospitably entertained by Mr. Jonathan Brooks, "a very respectable citizen, and member of the Baptist church, whose catholic spirit led him to welcome the ministers of Christ, of different denominations, and to open his house for their ministrations."* This liberal-hearted gentleman immediately called a meeting for his guest, in the court-house, where the latter preached, at night, on the new birth, to a solemn and weeping audience. "Surely God is in this place," exclaimed the preacher; "I felt as if I was among the faithful followers of the Lord Jesus."

In June, of the following year, he again visited New London, and was received with undiminished cordiality. He preached several times, during this visit.

In 1791 Asbury paused in the city, and preached in the court-house, from 2 Peter, 3 : 15 : "*And account that the long-suffer-*

*MS. Sermon on the History of the M. E. Church in New London, by Rev. Ralph W. Allen, — to which we are indebted for most of the *materiale* of this sketch.

ing of our Lord is salvation." "The New Light Baptists," he says, "were very kind;" but he remarks that the religious interest of the preceding year was nearly extinct.

Though a circuit bearing the name of New London was instituted "in the beginning of the year 1793,"* yet a Methodist society was not organized in the city till October of that year. It was formed at the house of Mr. Richard Douglass, and consisted of eleven persons. We have met with a list of the members who joined it during the first year of its history; they were, Richard Douglass, Ann Douglass, Nancy Douglass, Peter Griffin, Abigail Griffin, Gennet Hall, Anna Mace, Sally Lewis, Isaac Rogers, Mary Lewis, George Potter, Elizabeth Potter, Ann Smith, Mercy Smith, Freelove Miller, Luther Gale, Susanna Stockman, Abigail Potter, and Epaphras Kibby, — the latter now a venerable name in our ministry. Only one of this little band was expelled from the church; nearly all of them have died in the Lord, and are now enjoying in heaven the company of the pioneer evangelists who were instrumental in their salvation.

In 1794, David Abbot, Willson Lee, Zadoc Priest, and Enoch Mudge, travelled the circuit, and ministered, periodically, to the infant church in the city. Jesse Lee also visited them this year, and "put up with Brother Richard Douglass." On Sunday, September 14th, he preached twice. "The Lord," he wrote, "has dealt very kindly with the people in this city. There was a gracious revival of religion among them last spring, and the first of the summer. Above *fifty have joined the Methodists.*" The year 1795 was distinguished in the calendar of the young church by the session of the Conference in New London. A score of preachers (lacking one) assembled there. The good and great Asbury presided. No chapel had yet risen to accommodate them; but they met, full of hope and courage, in the house of Daniel Burrows.

In 1798 the first Methodist chapel in New London was erected. Methodism did all its work with despatch, in those days. Everything was preliminary; necessity, not convenience,

*Lee's History of Methodism. Anno 1793.

was consulted. The new church was raised on Monday, July 16th, and dedicated, by Lee, on the following Sunday.* "His text was, '*This day is salvation come to this house.*'" Asbury was present, and preached twice on the same day, "greatly assisted in mind and body." The building, at its dedication, was little more than the bare frame. It was soon covered and rudely furnished, though "for some years it remained in an unfinished state. But this humble, unadorned house became a palace to many souls. It was, indeed, the spiritual birth-place of hundreds. Many will recollect it, with delight, through eternity." †

In 1808 New London was honored with another session of the Conference. It commenced on the 17th of April, and was attended (as usual in those days) by a remarkable revival of religion. It was about this time that Lee was passing through New England, revisiting the scenes of his former labors. He reached New London on the 7th of July, was received to the home of his old friend Richard Douglass, and stood up, the same night, amidst the multitude of mourners, proclaiming, "*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*" A happy meeting was this to many of his old hearers, who expected to see him no more on earth. The congregation was crowded, and his word was attended with quickening power; three persons fell to the floor, and lay like dead men. His "soul was happy," and "many tears were shed." At five o'clock the next morning, he was again preaching the word, in the Methodist chapel. "I had a precious time," he writes; "the Lord was with us, of a truth. Many were affected, thank God!"

The year 1816 was distinguished by a still more extraordinary work of grace in New London, under the labors of Ebenezer Blake and Daniel Dorchester. At the commencement of the year there were but eighty-one members in the church, but during this and the next year there was an addition of more than three hundred. The revival commenced in September, and continued, with great interest and power, during

* Asbury's Journals. Anno 1798. † Rev. Mr. Allen's Historical Sermon.

several months. A profound and holy influence seemed to pervade almost the entire community. At a prayer-meeting held in the dwelling-house of Mr. Richard Douglass, it is said that seventeen persons were brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, in one evening. Many other instances might be recorded, in which the power of God was wonderfully displayed in the salvation of souls.

In 1817 Mr. Blake was continued on the circuit, with Rev. Joel M'Kee as his colleague. In consequence of the great addition which had been made to the society, the old meeting-house became quite too small, and it was thought expedient that a new one should be erected. During the spring and summer of this year, the second house was commenced, and in part completed. Mr. Blake did much in accomplishing the undertaking. He not only headed the subscription paper, and solicited and obtained aid from others to a considerable amount, but a donation which the society received from the state was appropriated, through his influence, for the purpose; so that it may be said, in truth, that the house owes, in a great measure, its existence, either directly or indirectly, to his influence.* Little did he then think that the church for whose especial benefit it was erected would be deprived of its use, and be under the necessity of seeking another place in which they might peaceably worship God.

The house was dedicated by Mr. Blake while in an unfinished state. He preached, on the occasion, from 1 John 2: 17, — "But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." It is said to have been an occasion of great interest.

In 1818 New London for the first time became a station, and Asa Kent was appointed the preacher. He labored, with acceptance and usefulness, during two years. Up to this time, New London had been included within the limits of a large circuit, and received preaching but a part of the time, on

*The State of Connecticut had a claim on the General Government for money expended in the war. This money, when received, was to be divided among the several denominations in the state. The Methodists in New London received their proportion, which was expended as above.

the Sabbath, from the circuit preachers. Now it was favored with the labors of an efficient pastor, all the time. The congregation increased, and very soon it was found that the house but recently erected for Divine worship was filled with attentive hearers. At the close of the year 1819, the church numbered 321 members, — a net increase of 30, for the last two years. Although 150 were received during this time, yet, when we recollect that 24 were expelled, 20 dropped, 3 withdrawn, and 63 removed, the small increase is readily accounted for. The church, however, at this period, was in a very prosperous state; peace and harmony prevailed throughout its borders.*

The society at New London was to have, however, like most of our early churches, the hardy but salutary training of adversity. It passed through a series of painful struggles, and suffered such reductions in its numbers, that, in 1824, it could no longer sustain itself as a station, but was again included in the New London circuit. During the preceding two years, there had been a decrease of 111 members. A dangerous heresy infected the church about this time, which proved fatal to many. It was a species of "Antinomianism," like what, at present, is known, in some parts of New England, by the term "Perfectionism," though this makes no part of Christian perfection, as believed by the Methodists generally. The end of those who embraced this error we need not here notice. We will only add, that it furnished a sad chapter in the history of the popular errors of the day, touching fundamental points in the Christian religion. The unhappy effect of this delusion on the church was felt somewhat extensively, though many stood unmoved in their course, and firmly established in their belief of the truths of the Gospel.

The New London church was formed again into a station the next year, and Rev. Isaac Stoddard appointed to it. His labors were prospered, and 152 members were reported at their close, being a gain of 41 within the last two years. Still the society was found to be too feeble to stand alone, and was connected with the Norwich station in 1828. It continued in this relation to Nor-

* Rev. Mr. Allen's Sermon.

wich till 1831, when it was again formed into an independent appointment, with Rev. James Porter for its pastor. Under his labors, prosperity returned to the struggling band. Their meetings became interesting, harmony was established, and discipline enforced. Some were expelled, and some withdrew; but the society advanced in vigor and numbers. At the end of his second year, Mr. Porter reported 252 members, — a gain, since 1828, when the appointment was connected with Norwich, of 96.

In 1838 the society enjoyed a revival of religion. A large number professed to experience the pardoning mercy of God, and united with the church. The congregation was unusually large, and all things appeared most prosperous. Successful efforts were made to pay a debt on the house. Mr. Holway, who was the preacher for the year, reported 377 members, being an increase of 158.*

Difficulties still awaited it, however, and in 1840 a storm burst upon it which was to try it to the utmost. The trustees informed the pastor, that after the next Conference, which was near at hand, he could no longer occupy the pulpit; and those who maintained their fidelity were compelled to leave the house which had been erected for their exclusive use, and to the erection of which they had contributed according to their ability. About forty of the seceders formed a society, called themselves "Independent Methodists," took possession of the chapel, and were ministered to, alternately, by Universalist and local Methodist preachers. The kindness of a neighboring denomination of Christians provided a shelter for the tried and suffering society; they were accommodated in the Conference room of the first Congregational church of the city, where they worshipped God in peace, though in deep affliction.

In 1841 the Rev. Ralph W. Allen took charge of them. "I found," says Mr. Allen, "the church in the Conference room, and 159 names on the Class-books. Soon after my arrival, a proposition was made by the new society, inviting us back into the house again. The committee appointed to confer with the church respecting it gave us the fullest assurance that we should

* Rev. Mr. Allen's Sermon.

have the house, without molestation, for all religious purposes, as long as we wished to occupy it. Desiring to promote peace and harmony, and thinking that it might be best for us to go back, under such circumstances, we concluded to do so; but we soon found that we were sadly mistaken. The privileges belonging to a Christian church worshipping in any place we could not there enjoy. A few men, claiming to be trustees, assumed the authority of governing and controlling the house as they thought proper, without consulting the society. Under such circumstances, no church could prosper. I was informed, in writing, by a committee said to have been appointed by the trustees, that I could not preach in the house after the 1st of June, 1842. Wishing to avoid all difficulty, and being assured by the committee that there must be difficulty if we attempted to stay in the chapel after the time specified, we concluded peaceably and quietly to leave it, and obtain another place of worship. Though we fully believed that the house belonged to the church, yet seeing no prospect of enjoying the rights and privileges that every church ought to enjoy in a house of worship, we thought best to retire; we did so in April, 1842. We did not leave it because we did not believe that it belonged to the church, but to avoid difficulty, and to enjoy peace and prosperity, which we considered of paramount importance."

Driven again from their rightful place of worship, they now retired into the court-house, where Lee, more than half a century before, proclaimed the doctrines of Methodism to their fathers. They were perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. Having been steadfast in the day of trial, they were, according to God's usual providence, authorized to look for his blessing, and for deliverance. They did so, and were not disappointed. Immediately the Divine Spirit overshadowed their humble assembly; their "meetings in the old court-house became unusually interesting; a glorious revival commenced; many were brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus." About one hundred were soon added to the small and struggling band. They immediately made efforts for a new chapel; a site was purchased, the

corner-stone laid, with solemnities, on the 4th of July, 1842, and on the 8th of the ensuing December, the grateful church, freed by the outstretched hand of God from the machinations of its opponents, entered its new chapel with thanksgiving and praise, and gave it, in joyful dedication, to God. "There they have worshipped since, in peace and love." At the end of Mr. Allen's appointment, they were about *three hundred* strong; and they have since, by decisions of the civil courts of Connecticut, obtained possession of their original chapel.

Thus does the Lord lead his people through the wilderness, guiding them, meanwhile, by the pillar of fire by night, and of cloud by day; supplying them with manna on the desert, and water from the rock; and permitting the faithful few at last to enter the land of promise with psalms of triumph. Justly does the former pastor of New London, from whom we have quoted, say: "We have seen that the church has had its seasons of prosperity and adversity. It has moved onward under the guidance of the day-star of hope, and sat down in tears, amidst clouds and darkness. But a brighter day has dawned upon us. Disaffected feeling, petty jealousies, and bitter animosities, have no longer, we trust, a place among us. And although the church has often been constrained to cry out, We are perplexed but not in despair, yet now, blessed be God! it is enabled to discover the bow of hope which throws its irradiating arch athwart the skies. And never will we despair of success, so long as the encouraging promise continues to fall on our ears, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'"

New London has been favored by the ministrations of a host of our veterans; among them, Enoch Mudge, Willson Lee, Lawrence McCoombs, Phineas Peck, Michael Coate, Aaron Hunt, Ebenezer Washburn, Isaac Bonney, Elijah Hedding, Asa Kent, and many similar men.

New Haven was one of the earliest scenes of the labors of Lee and his coädjutors, but was at first rigidly impassive to their efforts; and though societies were formed in all directions around it, not until six years after Lee's arrival was a Class organized in the Orthodox metropolis of the state.

Lee's first visit to New Haven was on the 21st of June, 1789, when he preached in the court-house, on Amos 5 : 6, — "Seek ye the Lord, and ye shall live." He had among his hearers the president of the college and one of the city pastors, and preached with his usual power. His second visit was on Sunday, July 5th, 1789. At five o'clock in the afternoon he had the state-house bell rung, and was about to begin religious services in that edifice, when several "influential men" invited him into the Congregational church. He accepted the request, and preached from Job 22, — "*Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace.*" In the beginning of the discourse he "did not feel very well satisfied, being raised in a high pulpit with a soft cushion under his hands;" but soon his usual facility returned. "I felt," he says, "the fire from above;" and towards the conclusion he preached "with great liberty." The countenances of the people revealed the effect of his word, and their tears answered to his appeals. Two Congregational clergymen were present, — Rev. Mr. Austin, pastor of the church, and the younger President Edwards. He received several congratulations after the sermon, but no invitation to a home. Accustomed to the warm generosity of the south, this frigid politeness was chilling to him. It somewhat tried his faith, also; — he usually considered his reception and entertainment among the people as an evidence of the Divine approval, on his mission in any given place. "I did believe," he says of New Haven, "that the Lord had sent me thither; if so, I was sure I should find favor in the eyes of some of the people." But in the present instance he was respectfully saluted, and left to himself. It is the province of God's workmen to do their work, and His province to take care of them. The laborious preacher, somewhat mortified, and yet trustful, went to a tavern, sought a room, and prostrated himself in prayer, "feeling the Lord precious to his soul." Soon a stranger — Mr. David Beecher — called for him, tendered him the hospitalities of his house, and pledged them to him for the future. The Itinerant had gained a resting-place, where he spent his first night in New Haven, in grateful repose.

On August 16th, after a day of laborious travel and preach-

ing, he entered New Haven again, in the evening, and was entertained by "Mr. Gilbert," a name which has since become conspicuous in the history of Methodism in New Haven. "He and his wife," said the way-worn traveller, "appear to be God-pleasing people." Their hospitable house became his endeared home whenever he returned to the city, and many have been the holy and heroic men of our ministry who have left their grateful blessing upon its threshold.

On March 21st, 1790, he was again in the Connecticut Athens. He thus speaks of his visit. "Sunday, 21st, after preaching in Milford, I rode to New Haven, and when the other meetings were out, they rang the bell for me; I preached on 2 Cor. 5: 17. It was a very pleasant day, and there was a large congregation to preach to; they paid great attention to the word. The number of people that attended, and the liberty I felt amongst them, caused me to hope that God would own the Methodists in New Haven. Lord, hasten the happy time, I beseech thee, and let these people be brought to a knowledge of themselves, and of thee! At night, met at Mrs. Gilbert's, for a conference meeting; and being often asked, I exhorted with much comfort in my soul, and some of the little number appeared to be much engaged with God."

One of the subsequent pastors of the church in New Haven gives the following sketch of its history, down to 1826.*

"Sometimes Mr. Lee was received with marks of friendship, and sometimes with great coldness, by the people. He frequently found a resting-place and a home in the family of Mr. Gilbert. We now number several of the third generation of this family as members of our church. I have heard as many as a dozen of them give in their testimony for Jesus in one general Class-meeting — the father, children, and grandchildren. How has the bread then cast upon the waters been gathered up after many days! The first Class here was formed in the year 1795, by the Rev. D. Ostrander. Their first number consisted of five [some say ten], two men and three women. The two men are still living. William Thatcher is well known as a man actively

* Rev. Heman Bangs, in Meth. Mag., 1827.

engaged in the work of the ministry; Pember Jocelyn, the other, is a local preacher, and although almost worn down with age and infirmities, is as *firmly attached* to the *cause* as ever; and, as far as his age and strength will allow, is as *zealously engaged* in the *work* as ever. He is beloved by many, and deservedly respected by all. He has lived to see the society rise and prosper; and will soon, probably, go down to the grave full of years and honor, and receive that crown which the Lord Jesus has promised to all that endure unto the end.* A Class being formed, they received regular preaching once in two weeks, on week-day evenings; and as the members were scattered in different parts of the town, they soon set apart two evenings in the week for meeting. William Thatcher and Pember Jocelyn entertained the preachers and their horses for several years; then Eli Hall, Jacob Wolf, and others, came to their assistance. These were days which tried men's souls. The little band had much persecution and many trials: but they loved each other, and small additions were made to the society from time to time; but owing to the removal of some, and other causes, for several years the society was small, and the members mostly in low circumstances. In 1800 an old building, formerly occupied by the Sandemanians, was purchased by Mr. Jocelyn, for a house of religious worship. Now they were favored with Sabbath preaching once in two weeks. Here they were often abused and disturbed in their meetings, by those who neither 'fear God nor regard man.' They even threatened to pull down the house, and would, most probably, have put their threats into execution, had it not been for the timely firmness and perseverance of Pember Jocelyn and some few others, who loved the cause more than life; for the mob actually broke into the house, and began to cut with axes, and break in pieces the seats and pulpit; but Jocelyn literally drove them out, as our Lord did the buyers and sellers from the temple — if not with small cords, yet with such weapons as he could get hold of. The just and strong arm of the law soon arrested and put a stop to these vile proceedings. Meetings were held in this building until 1807,

* This was written in 1827. Pember Jocelyn has since died.

when a house of worship was erected in Temple-street; in 1810 it was seated below,— in 1814 the galleries were put up, and the house finished. Here the great Head of the church favored them with several revivals of religion, and the number of disciples was considerably increased, under the labors of Rev. R. Hubbard, in 1808, and again in 1810, under the labors of Rev. J. Lyon. At this time it was embraced in what was called Middletown circuit; but by not having a stationed preacher to make a steady use of church discipline, and extend a faithful and pastoral care over the lambs of the flock, many fell away. In 1811 the Rev. T. Bishop was stationed here. He was the first stationed preacher in New Haven. Through his instrumentality a steady congregation was gathered, and the society began to be respected in the midst of its persecutors. Several, this year, came from the Congregational societies and joined us. Although they had had a stationed preacher nearly three years, they continued in connection with the circuit until 23d December, 1813, when this connection was dissolved, and a regular Quarterly Conference organized by the Rev. N. Bangs, Presiding Elder of Rhinebeck district. From this time the business relating to the station was transacted within itself. Dec. 27, 1813, a Class of seven members was formed at Hampden Plains, and attached to New Haven. But some removed, some died, some withdrew, and some were expelled; so that, with all that had been received, there were returned to Conference, in May, 1814, only fifty-five whites and eleven colored, — sixty-six in all. In 1819 the Rev. E. Hibbard was reäppointed here. Now the work began to go forward gloriously, and many valuable members were added to the society this year, and the church enjoyed great peace and love. In 1820 and 1821 the Rev. W. Thatcher labored here, and the work which had been begun the year before continued to increase and spread with increasing power. It became general through the town and its suburbs, and very many were gathered into the different churches. Our congregations increased, until it was found necessary to enlarge our house of worship. It was determined to build a new house, which, by persevering exertion, was

effected; the new house was completed and dedicated in the spring of 1822. It was built of brick, on the north-west corner of the public square, or green, sixty-eight by eighty feet, and had a basement story of about sixty-seven feet square. It was plain and convenient, and reflected much honor upon the builders."

The church at New Haven has continued to advance. It now includes two societies, which have substantial chapels, one of them being among the very best edifices of the kind belonging to the denomination in the United States. In 1850 there were in the city five hundred and thirty-three Methodists.

Thompson, Conn., is noted in our early annals as a place of frequent resort and successful labor, by Lee, Asbury, and their fellow Itinerants. We are indebted to Rev. H. S. Ramsdell, who is familiar with its local reminiscences, for the following interesting sketch of its Methodist church.

In 1793 a Methodist preacher, by the name of John Allen, commenced preaching at a place then called Cargill's Mills, but now known by the name of Wilkinsonville, or Pomfret Factory. It is located on the Quinabaugh river, not far from the corners of three towns, viz., Thompson, Pomfret, and Killingly, and about two and a half miles south from the West Thompson meeting-house. Capt. Benjamin Cargill, who owned the mills, although not a Methodist, or a professor of religion, invited John Allen to his house, and fitted up a large hall, in the chamber of what is now called the old boarding-house, and at present looks somewhat antiquated. This hall made a very convenient place for preaching, and many assembled there to hear the word. It was not uncommon for people to come ten or twelve miles to hear the new doctrine, as it was then termed. A number were awakened and converted, while John Allen remained. In about three months John Allen discontinued his visits, and Capt. Cargill sent for other preachers. About this time, Aaron Hunt, Richard Swain, Enoch Mudge, and a preacher by the name of Thompson, visited and preached with them; but which of them came first, after Allen left, the old members are unable to say. The first Class was formed by Ezekiel Cooper, in 1794. This

Class was composed of five female members, viz., Sarah Bugbee, Sarah White, Sarah Flin, Lucy Perrin, and Lucy Massey. It is somewhat remarkable that all the five lived to see four-score years, and that their average ages would not now fall short of eighty-five years. Three of them have gone to their rest, in peace; the other two hold on their way, walking in the "old paths." Sarah Bugbee is now in her ninety-sixth year. Of her it may truly be said, she has run and has not been weary; she has walked and has not been faint; she has mounted up on wings, like the eagle, and has long lived above the clouds, enjoying perpetual sunshine, free alike from darkness and from doubts. "I have been acquainted with her for more than twenty years, and well recollect that in our Love Feasts and social meetings her words always burned, and if there was a want of feeling before, there was no lack while this old saint spoke. As her eyesight is good, she reads much. The Bible and Wesley's sermons are her chief reading. It is but a few years since she read the Bible nearly seven times through in two years, beside much other reading. I visited her last week. She remarked she was desiring to depart and be with Christ, as soon as her heavenly Father saw fit to call her. She spoke of the pleasant interview she had with Bishop Waugh, who visited her last spring; of the death of 'Father' Pickering, and other old preachers who preached here in the early days of Methodism; and as she spoke of the blessings she received while attending upon their ministry, the energy and vigor of former years seemed to return, and raising her hands as if she would give wings to her spirit, she exclaimed, 'O, how I long to be with them!' In fact, it does one's soul good to converse with this relict of early Methodism, who is almost on the verge of heaven. Soon after the first society was formed, there was an addition made of twelve members, including Capt. Jonathan Nichols, David Cady, William Dwight, Elijah Nichols, Elijah Nichols, Jr., Joseph Buck, and Noah Perrin. The first four lived to be very aged. E. Nichols died at the age of 97. The three last named still live, at the age of near four-score years. They tell me it was long before there was a death among them, and that most

of the first members lived to be aged. There are now in this charge ten old members, who joined soon after the society was formed. The first Quarterly Meeting held in this society was in a grove owned by Noah Perrin; it was held in 1794, by George Roberts. He is spoken of as having preached with great effect on the occasion. There were then but two districts in New England. Ezekiel Cooper and George Roberts were the Presiding Elders."

About this time Enoch Mudge preached in Thompson and the neighboring region. "It was," he says,* "in 1794 I first visited Thompson. I had one of the appointments on New London circuit. As I was travelling from Rhode Island State, where I had been stationed the year before, I fell in company with a young man going from Providence to Killingly. We soon entered into conversation on religious subjects. I found him serious, and ready to hear my experience and exhortations. As we were obliged to seek shelter from a long shower of rain, night overtook us before we reached the place of his residence. He kindly proposed, as I was a stranger in those parts, that I should turn aside and tarry the night with him, to which I cheerfully consented. Surely the Lord directed my way. I blessed the Lord God of my Master, as did Abraham's servant. I felt the Lord had led me to the house where there was meat for myself and provender for my horse, and work to do for God. This young man was David Cady, who was afterwards known as a local preacher for many years, and whose son, Jonathan Cady, is now in the travelling connection. This was in the Sabin neighborhood, where has been a harvest of souls gathered into the kingdom of the Redeemer. I went on my way until I arrived at Wilbraham, where were assembled a number of preachers for Conference. I was stationed on New London circuit, and, in company with Jesse Lee, returned to New London, and thence around to Pomfret, to Cargill's Mills, Thompson, &c. Here the work soon began to revive in power. Willson Lee, David Abbot, Zadoc Priest, and Enoch Mudge, were stationed on New London circuit. W. Lee's sword was too sharp

* Letter to the author, in 1845.

for the scabbard; he soon fell a victim to his zeal and labor. Z. Priest soon followed, and died at Norton, at old Bro. Newcomb's. D. Abbot returned to the south, and has gone to rest. It was at the Conference held at Bro. Nichols' chamber that I was ordained Elder; and I was one of those who came from the Province of Maine, and returned there after Conference. Blessed times these, when we had our meetings in the unfinished chambers, kitchens, groves, and barns! A great multitude of the old worthies who first received us into their houses, fed us and our horses, now rise to my recollection — blessings on their memories! and I hope to meet them and their children in heaven. My soul catches fire at the thought of the old pulpits where we used to stand to proclaim redeeming love to listening, weeping souls. True, these days are gone — but the Redeemer lives; circumstances are different — the Gospel is the same; when preached in simplicity and power, it has like effects in turning sinners to God."

"Shortly after the Quarterly Meeting of 1794, above mentioned," continues Mr. Ramsdell, "the meetings were removed from Cargill's to N. Perrin's, about one mile south from Cargill's. To accommodate the preachers, a portable pulpit was provided, which, on preaching days, was placed at one end of the old kitchen, where the people assembled to hear the word. The old pulpit still exists, and is sacredly kept by Mr. Perrin, as a relic of former days. I called to see it a few days since. It is near five feet high, and about two and a half feet wide, having a step on which the speaker could sufficiently elevate his person to accommodate his audience while speaking, and one still higher, on which to kneel.

"Soon after they left Cargill's, they also commenced preaching in the house of Capt. Jonathan Nichols, about two or two and a half miles north of Cargill's. It was in this house (J. Nichols'), in an unfinished chamber, that Bishop Asbury held a Conference in 1796. The house is now owned by Faxon Nichols, and, having been newly covered during the last year, will, most likely, stand for many years to come, — an interesting historical monument. There were about thirty preach-

ers at the Conference; some of them were from a distance of three hundred miles. Seven Deacons and five Elders were ordained. Bishop Asbury preached, on Acts 26: 18–19. This sermon is spoken of as having been so interesting and powerful, that the Congregational minister (Dr. Dow) listened to it with such attention, that, notwithstanding he did not get asleep, as did the young man when Paul preached, yet he came near 'falling headlong,' having moved his chair so near the stairway, while listening, that one hitch more would have certainly precipitated him down the stairway, which at that time had no rail or banisters; — one less attentive, however, seeing his danger, gave him timely warning. My father-in-law tells me that at this Conference he often saw Lorenzo Dow sitting on the walls and walking on the common, weeping, on account of his rejection, — the Conference having refused to receive him. At this time the society here was small, and possessed but little of this world's goods; yet the following year (1797) Jonathan Nichols, Elijah Nichols, Elijah Nichols, Jr., and William Dwight, joined together to build a house for the Lord, and to complete it as nearly as their means would allow, and leave it to be finished when the Lord should give them ability. The posts of the house were eighteen feet high; the house was thirty-two wide, thirty-six long. They clapboarded it on the studs, not feeling able to line it. Having put in the windows, and painted the body of the house yellow and the roof red, they put up a pulpit, and a frame for a gallery; a few rough boards were prepared for seats, and Daniel Ostrander was called to dedicate this humble temple of Methodism to the God of our fathers. At this time the house was not lathed or plastered; it was entirely in a rough state inside, and the four brethren who built it felt grateful that they were able to advance thus far in the work."

In 1806 this ancient structure was somewhat renewed and completed. In 1839 it was superseded by an entirely new edifice, which was dedicated by Bishop Soule. Mr. Ramsdell remarks that "'This most beautiful house,' to use the language of the bishop in his sermon, is forty-two by sixty-seven feet, and

one of the finest anywhere in the country; and but few in the cities excel it. The granite vestry was left unfinished until after the dedication, for the purpose of incorporating into it some portions of the old house. We put up the slips there as they stood in the old house. The old altar, around which we had seen hundreds of penitents bow, we also set up; it remains there, without being marred with paint or varnish. The new house is some ten or twelve rods west of the location of the old one. A year after the new house was erected, two Classes were set off from this charge to what was then Danielsonville mission. The following year a new chapel was built at Fisherville, three miles north. Since then a house of worship has been built in the east part of the town; so that at present we have, in Thompson, three meeting-houses and three stationed preachers. Of the four persons who built the first house, three have gone to rest; Elijah Nichols (then E. N., Jr.) only remains. He remarked to me that he commenced the world poor, but had been prospered, as he had given to the cause of God. He has been favored with honorable opportunities in this respect. He gave for the building of the first Methodist chapel in Boston, for the first in Providence, the first in Webster, and also several others, as well as to our College, and the Wilbraham Academy; and, lest he should cease to do good, has secured to the society here two thousand dollars as a permanent fund, the interest of which is to go annually to the Preacher's Aid Society, Missionary Society, &c. Religion took a deep hold on our early members. Mr. Nichols has lived to see his five children and four of his grandchildren converted to God; and now, at a very advanced age, is waiting for his change to come."

Methodism has passed through its usual adversities in Thompson, but with no little prosperity. The three churches now in the town comprise more than three hundred and fifty members.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR 1808–9.

Asbury returns to the North. — New York Conference. — Asbury at New London. — New England Conference. — Examination of Characters. — General Conference. — Finances. — Proceedings. — Ordinations. — Asbury Travelling.

EARLY in the spring of 1808, Asbury returned to New York, after a fatiguing tour in the south, and more than five thousand miles travel, within the preceding twelve months. "O my soul! rest in God," he exclaims, as he journeys onward. "I hear, and see, and feel, many serious things; but I must take care of my own soul; my care is to love, to suffer, and to please God."

On Wednesday, April 6th, he opened the New York Conference, at Amenia, N. Y. This body, yet in its infancy, had grown rapidly; nearly a hundred preachers were present, and the bishop appointed eighty-eight to posts of labor. The roll presents many venerable names; among them were Elijah Woolsey, Aaron Hunt, Laban Clark, Ezekiel Cooper, Phineas Peck, Samuel Draper, Elias Vanderlip, John Finnegan, William Phœbus, Seth Crowell, Freeborn Garrettson, Nathan Bangs, Henry Ryan, and Joseph Sawyer.

The session continued one week, and on the day of its adjournment Asbury departed for New London, Ct., the seat of the New England Conference. He arrived, by forced rides, on Friday, 15th. "My last two days' rides," he remarks, the next day, "were severe; my flesh is not brass, nor my old bones iron; but I was in peace and communion with the Father and the Son. On Saturday, we had a great storm. Confinement in doors gave me an opportunity of preparing papers for the Conference."

On Sunday he preached in the Baptist chapel; it was more capacious than the Methodist house, and the liberal church which occupied it very generously exchanged it for the latter, that the

Conference, and the large number of Methodists who had come from the neighboring circuits, might be more conveniently accommodated. It was crowded by a vast throng, which hung upon the word of the apostolic bishop.

The session began on Monday, April 18th. There were forty members present, besides the probationers; among the former were Brodhead, Pickering, Soule, Hedding, Ruter, Sabin, Washburn, Beale, Branch, Bates, Sias, Steele, and other similar men. Taken as a whole, the Conference was one of remarkable strength. Few of our larger modern sessions present an equal proportion of genuine ability and moral effectiveness. The examination of characters commenced the first day. Eleazar Wells was pronounced "zealous, faithful, devout;" Solomon Sias, "unimpeachable, profitable, — a disciplinarian;" Benjamin F. Lambord "improving, acceptable, useful, diligent;" Joel Steele, "a holy man, useful." Henry Martin is recorded to have been "successful in his labors, and to have had many souls awakened and converted under his ministrations;" Ebenezer Blake, "pious, faithful, successful;" Charles Virgin, "a good man, — faithful, and acceptable." Joseph Merrill possessed "good gifts, and was improving." David Kilburn was "regular, devout, a dispassionate speaker, confirmed in doctrine and discipline;" Isaac Bonney, "pious, improved, of very good abilities, faithful, confirmed," &c. These notes, slight as they are, possess no little interest to such readers as have been acquainted with the subsequent standing and old age of the men who were thus characterized in the youthful beginning of their public life. Others, of less merit, were not less frankly described. One "was devout, but there was some doubt of his abilities;" another was "very independent, but somewhat useful." One "was established in doctrine and discipline, but had singularities." Another "was devout, but of moderate abilities;" and another, "very pious, with good abilities, natural and acquired; but, being insolvent, was rejected."

The General Conference of 1808 was at hand; and the New England preachers, being favorable to its reörganization as a delegated body, elected seven representives to it. They were, George Pickering, Joshua Soule, Elijah R. Sabin, Oliver Beale,

Martin Ruter, Elijah Hedding, and Thomas Branch. A memorial was also adopted, in favor of the proposed change.

There is no account extant of the financial affairs of the Conference. A brief allusion in the records indicates that Asbury brought the usual donation from the Middle States; $300 were received from the Book Concern, and $190 from the Chartered Fund. Doubtless the deficit was as great, if not greater, than heretofore, for Martin Ruter "draughted an address to the brethren requesting their charity for the distressed travelling preachers."

It was voted, unanimously, that "we keep all Fridays as days of fasting or abstinence, and recommend the same course among our brethren."

Asbury says: "The Conference sat till Friday; we wrought in haste, in great order, and in peace, through a great deal of business. There were seventeen Deacons, travelling and local, ordained; and nine Elders ordained in the Congregational church, before fifteen hundred or two thousand witnesses. I know not where large congregations are so orderly as in the Eastern States. There was a work of God going on during the sitting of the Conference. The General Conference hastened our breaking up, the delegates thereto requesting leave to go. There were deficiencies in money matters, but no complaints."

The members who were ordained Deacons at this Conference were, Pliny Brett, Philip Ayer, Greenleaf R. Norris, Jonathan Chaney, Eleazar Wells, Solomon Sias, Theophilus Smith, Joel Steel, Thomas Asbury, John Wilkinson, Benjamin F. Lambord, William Hunt.

The Elders ordained at this session were, Joseph Fairbank, Caleb Fogg, Lewis Bates, John Tinkham, William Stevens, Dan Young.

Asbury departed immediately after the adjournment. On Tuesday, 26th, after a ride of thirty-eight miles in a rain-storm, he arrived in New York city. "I feel," he writes, "my shoulders eased a little, now that I have met the seven Conferences. I have lived to minute five hundred and fifty-two preachers in this country. The increase, this short year, is 7500, in round numbers."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

Appointments. — Extent of the Field. — Abner Clark. — His History. — Death. — William Swayze. — His Great Success. — Death. — Isaac Bonney. — Early Life. — Appointments. — Character. — David Kilburn. — Christian Experience. — Travels. — Thomas Branch. — Incidents.

The appointments of the New England Conference, for the year 1808–9, were the following:

Boston District. John Brodhead, *Presiding Elder*. *Boston*, Daniel Webb, Martin Ruter; *Lynn*, Dan Young; *Marblehead*, David Bachelor; *Salisbury, Poplin, and Salem*, William Stevens, Alfred Metcalf, Thomas Asbury; *Harwich*, Erastus Otis; *Sandwich and Scituate*, Joseph Snelling, Joseph S. Merrill; *New Bedford*, Epaphras Kibby; *Nantucket*, Nehemiah Coye; *Newport*; Samuel Merwin; *Bristol*, Jordan Rexford; *Rhode Island*, Levi Walker; *Warren*, Joshua Crowell; *Norton and Easton*, Samuel Cutler. George Pickering, Missionary.

New London District. Elijah R. Sabin, *Presiding Elder*. *New London*, Greenleaf R. Norris, Isaac Bonney; *Tolland*, Benjamin F. Lambord; *Ashburnham*, Ebenezer Washburn; *Needham*, John Tinkham, Isaac Locke; *Providence*, Benjamin P. Hill; *Smithfield*, Pliny Brett, *East Greenwich*, Theophilus Smith; *Pomfret*, Hollis Sampson, Abner Clark.

Vermont District. Thomas Branch, *Presiding Elder*. *Athens*, Joseph Fairbank; *Wethersfield*, Dan Perry, Leonard Frost; *Barnard*, Samuel Thompson, Nathaniel W. Stearns; *Vershire*, Eleazar Wells; *Barre*, Solomon Sias; *Danville*, John W. Hardy; *Stanstead*, Charles Virgin.

New Hampshire District. Elijah Hedding, *Presiding Elder*. *Grantham*, Caleb Dustin, Paul Dustin; *Hanover*, David Carr; *Bridgewater*, William Hunt; *Pembroke*, Hezekiah Field;

Tuftonboro', Lewis Bates; *Northfield and Centre Harbor*, Joseph Peck; *Landaff*, Zachariah Gibson; *Lunenburg*, Ebenezer Blake.

Portland District. Joshua Soule, *Presiding Elder*. *Durham*, Warren Banister, Isaac Smith; *Portland*, Joel Winch; *Scarboro'*, Samuel Hillman; *Falmouth*, Enoch Jaques, Caleb Currier; *Conway*, Philip Munger; *Bethel*, Jonathan Chaney; *Livermore*, Allen H. Cobb, Joshua Randle; *Poland*, John Wilkinson.

Kennebec District. Oliver Beale, *Presiding Elder*. *Readfield*, Ebenezer Fairbank, Junius Spalding; *Norridgewock*, Caleb Fogg; *Hallowell*, Henry Martin; *Vassalboro'*, Philip Ayer; *Union*, John Williamson; *Bristol*, Joel Steel; *Union River*, David Kilburn; *Orrington*, Daniel Ricker; *Hampden*, Joseph Baker; *Palmyra*, William Hinman.

The appointments of the New York Conference, which were wholly or in part within New England, were,

Ashgrove District. William Anson, *Presiding Elder*. *Cambridge*, Mitchell B. Bull, Lewis Pease; *Brandon*, Dexter Bates, Stephen Sornborger; *Charlotte*, Andrew McKain; *Fletcher*, Phineas Cook, James Edmonds; *Dunham*, Oliver Sykes; *Grand Isle*, Francis Brown.

Rhinebeck District. Aaron Hunt, *Presiding Elder*. *Chatham*, Smith Arnold, Friend Draper; *Pittsfield*, Eben Smith, John Crawford; *Whittingham*, Reuben Harris, Cyprian H. Gridley; *Buckland*, William Swayze; *Granville*, Laban Clark, Jacob Beeman; *Litchfield*, Henry Eames, Andrew Prindle.

In addition to these, there were, on the New York district, under the Presiding Eldership of Joseph Crawford, *Redding*, Noble W. Thomas and Jonathan Lyon; *Middletown and Hartford*, James M. Smith, Phineas Rice, Joseph Sackwood, and Reuben Hubbard.

There were in New England, the present year, *eight* districts (including Ashgrove and Rhinebeck) and part of a ninth, *sixty-eight* circuits and stations, and one mission at large; and *one hundred and three* preachers. There had been a considerable numerical growth of the church, as we have already seen; but

owing to the consolidation of its plans of labor, there was an apparent loss of one circuit, while there was an actual addition of at least two new ones.

Abner Clark, designated in the above list to Pomfret, Conn., circuit, began his ministerial travels the present year. He was born in Salem, N. H., May 1, 1788; was converted in the nineteenth year of his age, and received as a probationer by the New England Conference in 1808. His ministerial life was short, extending only through six years, during which he was appointed successively to Pomfret, Ct., Sandwich, N. H., Pembroke, Mass., Bridgewater, N. H., Norway Plains, N. H., and Falmouth, Mass. In these spheres of labor "he was acceptable, much beloved, and greatly esteemed as a Christian and Christian minister."*

In January of 1814 his health began to decline; but his spiritual strength and comfort increased, as the prospects of life receded. Early in his sickness, after some religious conversation with the family with which he was tarrying, "he fell into a train of reflections on the goodness and mercy of God toward himself and others. While thus musing, his soul was filled with love. He soon began to pray and praise aloud, and continued till his strength failed. He remarked that he had never been so unspeakably filled with the love of God, since the day of his conversion. He manifested an earnest desire for the conversion of sinners, and prayed for them very fervently, and finally said, 'If it is the will of God, and my sleeping dust could preach to sinners, I should be willing to lay my bones in Falmouth.'"

He was soon after attacked with severe and complicated symptoms; but the grace and consolation of the Holy Spirit were proportioned to his sufferings. "Not long before his death, he declared that he had the fullest confidence in the truth of that Gospel which he had preached. 'I can lean upon it,' said he, 'for it is the Gospel of Christ: it is the truth of God; it came from heaven.' He suffered much in his affliction; but patience, fortitude, peace, and resignation, were his constant attendants."

* Minutes, 1814.

The day of his departure arrived, and it was one of spiritual triumph. Some of his friends standing by his bed "informed him that they thought he was dying; he replied, 'The will of the Lord be done.' A few moments afterward, he said, 'I am going! I am going! Blessed be God for victory over sin, the world, and the devil. I have gained the victory, and soon expect my disembodied spirit will join the band of music above, and bear some humble part in praising God, and stand with the hundred and forty-four thousand on the sea of glass,' to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. After which, he added, 'Mercy and Truth have met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other,' and then soon expired, without a struggle or a groan."

"Thus," add his fellow-laborers, "ended the useful life of our beloved Brother Clark." And thus, we may superadd, ended the useful lives of nearly all the faithful Itinerants of those times. They sacrificed all for God; and, in making the sacrifice, they found all, for they found God, who in life, in death, and through eternity, is all and in all, to the sanctified soul. He died on the 20th of February, 1814, at the early age of 26.

William Swayze was "a good soldier of Jesus Christ." He labored nearly forty years as a local and travelling preacher, and with extraordinary success. He was born in Sussex County, New Jersey, November 18, 1784, and dated his conversion May 20th, 1800. He was early led to exercise his talents as a local preacher; and such was his success in the awakening and conversion of his hearers, that he was confirmed in the conviction that his appropriate work for life was the ministry of the word. After several years of great usefulness as a local preacher, he joined the New York Conference, in 1807. During eight years,* he travelled extensively within the New York Conference, most of his circuits being in New England. These were years of signal usefulness, and many precious recollections of him still linger in his earliest fields of labor. In 1815 he was transferred to the Ohio Conference, where his ministrations were attended with his former success, and where living witnesses of his usefulness still survive, especially on Columbus circuit and in Chilli-

* Not ten, as stated in the Conference Obituary of 1842.

cothe. In the latter place, his word was eminently in the demonstration of the Spirit and power. In 1820 he took charge of the Ohio district, and "his labors, for almost four years, were crowned with unexampled success." * By the division of the Conference in 1824, he was assigned to the Pittsburg Conference, and appointed to the Erie district, where he was distinguished by "his usual prosperity." In 1828 he superintended the Canton district. In 1830 he was re-transferred to the Ohio Conference. After having borne the burden of twenty-seven years' labor and suffering, in some of the most difficult portions of the ministerial field, the infirmities of age and illness at last disabled him. He received, at this time, an expression of sympathy and brotherly courtesy, which could not fail to console his declining years. When no longer able to perform effective service, his brethren of the Pittsburg Conference invited him, by formal request, to return to their body, share their provisions for worn-out preachers, and die among them. In honoring him with this act of generous consideration, the Conference still more eminently honored itself. He was transferred, and placed upon its superannuated list, where he remained till he departed to his final rest. He died at Edinburgh, Ohio, the 29th of March, 1841, in the 57th year of his age, and in great peace and resignation. His fellow-laborers pronounce him "a martyr to his work." He suffered much during his superannuation, but with unabated devotion and Christian comfort. As his end drew near, the shattered tenement of clay seemed to let in upon his spirit new and more radiant illuminations from the spiritual world. The sublime subjects of religion, and the prospects of immortality and eternal life, were unusually unveiled to his contemplation, and afforded him special consolation, as he went down into the valley and shadow of death.

Isaac Bonney is a beloved name on the list of this year's appointments. He was born in Sandwich, Mass., Sept. 26, 1782. "Like other sinners, I grew up," he writes,† "without a saving knowledge of the true God, till my eighteenth year, when, at a prayer-meeting, my attention was called to the great inter-

* Minutes, 1842. † Letter to the author.

ests of eternity. Having obtained hope in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, I joined a Methodist Class, in March, 1800, at Brookfield. A Class consisting of seven members had been formed the January preceding." *

In 1801 he was appointed Class-leader, and his devotion and talents soon after induced his brethren to license him as a local preacher. Asbury ordained him a local Deacon in 1806, and he was received on trial, the present year, by the New England Conference. His first appointment was on New London circuit, where his colleague was Ebenezer Washburn, — "a most excellent man and a good preacher," writes Mr. Bonney.† This was a year of marvellous religious interest, throughout the circuit; the word ran and was glorified. "Three hundred and forty members were received," and Methodism was thoroughly reïnvigorated. Mr. Bonney was fully introduced, by this first appointment, to the fatigues and privations of the Itinerant ministry; — the circuit required about two hundred and fifty miles' travel and thirty sermons, besides other public exercises, in twenty-eight days. The following three years, he travelled the Pomfret (Ct.) and Needham (Mass.) circuits, — the latter two years. In 1812 he located, on account of enfeebled health; but resumed his travels in 1818, when he was reäppointed to Needham circuit. His subsequent appointments were, in 1819, Somerset and Mansfield, Mass.; 1820 and 1821, Bristol, R. I.; 1822 and 1823, Nantucket, Mass. (two years of great success, in which over two hundred souls were converted); 1824 and 1825, Boston; 1826 and 1827, Duxbury, Mass.; 1828, Thompson, Ct.; 1829, Bristol, R. I., where there were more than two hundred conversions under his labors; 1830 and 1831, Boston; 1832 and 1833, Lynn (South-street); 1834 and 1835, Lynn (Wood End); 1836 and 1837, Warren, R. I.; 1838 and 1839, New Bedford; 1840 and 1841, Fall River, Mass.; 1842 and 1843, Warren, R. I.; 1844 and 1845, Bristol, R. I.; 1846 and 1847, Pawtucket, R. I. Here, after about forty years' hard labor in the ministry, his health failed, and he was compelled to retire

* See sketch of Asa Kent, p. 188.

† Greenleaf R. Norris was appointed to this circuit; but Mr. Washburn took his place.

into the superannuated ranks. He was soon after attacked by severe illness, from which he still suffers.

Mr. Bonney now resides in Bristol, R. I. He has done faithful service in the church, and justly enjoys its veneration and affection in his declining life. He stoops under the burden of years, and his features wear the marks of care and thoughtfulness. He has been distinguished by modest worth, a pure exemplariness of life, an indisposition to accept the preferments of honor or place among his brethren, a sound but unpretending piety, a discriminating judgment, good pulpit ability, and success in his labors. Isaac Bonney is, in fine, one of those modest but genuine men, who are prized immeasurably more by discerning minds among their friends than they are by themselves, and whose associates learn to value them higher as they know them better. We take leave of him here, with regret that our sketch could not be more ample. He is an example of our primitive ministry which the future historian of Methodism will commemorate with pleasure.

David Kilburn also remains among us, a devoted and beloved veteran of the early times. He was born in Gilsum, N. H., October 22d, 1784. His parents were members, and his father a deacon, of the Congregationalist church. "I received from them,"* he writes, "what was then considered a religious education, though I heard but little said upon experimental godliness until I heard the preaching of the Methodists. The first Methodist preacher whom I ever heard was John Nichols, in the year 1799. From childhood I had serious reflections on the subject of religion, and often mourned for my sins, in view of my danger of being forever lost, without repentance and reformation. These impressions were deepened by the preaching of the Gospel, especially when I heard the first Methodist preachers, and I then resolved to lead a new life. But when opposition arose, I was easily turned aside, and, for about two years, I was accustomed to make light of religion; yet, at the same time, in my sober moments, I felt it to be a Divine reality. In the spring of 1802 my attention was again called to the subject, under the minis-

* Letter to the author.

terial labors of Martin Ruter, then a young man of seventeen. From that time I became more serious, and lived but few days without prayer. But I obtained no satisfactory evidence of my acceptance with God till about a year from that period. In the month of April, 1803, I made a public profession of justification by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and joined the M. E. church, at the house of Mr. Day, in Keene, N. H., Rev. John Gove being at that time the pastor."

He soon became active in the church as a leader and exhorter. After several years of useful labor as a local preacher, he was received on probation at the New England Conference of 1808, and appointed to Union River, Me., at that time the most eastern circuit in the United States. On his way thither to his first appointment, he spent the first Sabbath in Buxton, Me. During the day he held a service at the church, and at five o'clock, P. M., at a private house. This meeting continued until eleven o'clock at night, and resulted in the conversion of six persons, "of whom," he writes, "those living in 1826 were all persevering Christians." He remained on this circuit three months, and at the first Quarterly Meeting was transferred to Orrington, an adjoining circuit, where his acquaintance with Enoch Mudge was formed at this time. "Mr. Mudge was then residing in Orrington, having located some years previously, and was very highly and deservedly respected by the people. There was also on the circuit a local preacher, named Kinney, who had been driven from Provincetown, Mass., by persecution. He headed the little band of Methodists in that place, who had prepared the timber for a meeting-house. A mob cut it into pieces, piled it together, and surmounted it with the effigy of a Methodist preacher, tarred and feathered. The Methodists then obtained another frame, on the Penobscot river. They took it from the vessel, raised it at once, and watched it, day and night, till it was enclosed. After some years, Mr. Kinney had a valuable horse wounded, in the pasture, apparently with a pitchfork, so that he was entirely spoiled. In consequence of this and other persecutions, he concluded to remove from the place. He put his effects in his own vessel, and went to Buckstown (now

Bucksport), Me., and a considerable part of the society in Provincetown soon followed him."

On his first Sabbath in Orrington, Mr. Kilburn heard Jesse Lee preach. He was then on his last visit to New England, which we shall narrate in our next chapter. "Mr. Lee's preaching," says Mr. Kilburn, "was plain, his language very simple, and easily understood; he alternately produced smiles and tears. At an interview with him at Mr. Mudge's, he remarked that he 'had not tasted a drop of strong drink since he saw him last.' This may illustrate the position of our early Methodist preachers in reference to the use of ardent spirits, at a time when their use was universal in the community."

He was sent, in 1809, to Readfield, Me., and in 1810 to Danville, Vt. This was a year of great prosperity; revivals broke out in nearly every part of the circuit, which was two hundred miles in extent. About one hundred and sixty converts were gathered into the church, besides the many who entered other communions. Thomas Branch was his Presiding Elder at this time. "He was," says Mr. Kilburn, "a man of middling stature, very neat and particular in his person and habits, and very solemn and devotional in all his intercourse with others. He had a clear understanding, and was mighty in the Scriptures. His sermons would read well. His delivery was chaste and fervent, and he was strong in argument. He was one of the best preachers of that day. In his official relation he was a remarkably strict disciplinarian. A man of fewer faults and so many excellences is rarely found."

Mr. Kilburn's subsequent appointments were, in 1811, Barnard Vt., where he was prospered, and added some forty or fifty to the church; 1812, Wethersfield, Vt.; 1813 and 1814, Barre, Vt., — "a year of reformation," he writes. The confusion of war raged through the land; but the preachers of Methodism continued, nevertheless, to press on their own spiritual battles against "the powers of darkness." "On Barre circuit we held," says Mr. Kilburn, "a camp-meeting, which continued over the Sabbath on which the battle of Lake Champlain was fought; and the sound of the guns was heard in the vicinity of the

camp ground. In the noise of war, and the excitement of feeling natural to those whose friends had answered the summons of the American commandant at Plattsburg, the work of salvation went on in our camp."

In 1815 he was Presiding Elder of New Hampshire district, which he continued to superintend during four years. "My predecessors," he writes, "on this district were John Brodhead, Elijah Hedding, Martin Ruter and Solomon Sias. During these four years there was much prosperity, many extensive revivals, abundance of labor, and very meagre support. My receipts in everything (with the exception of my board among the people, when on my tours) did not average one hundred dollars a year; and the average receipts of the preachers on the district did not much exceed that amount. But I was cheerful and happy, and was never deprived of an hour's sleep by anticipation of want."

In 1819 he was appointed to Needham circuit, Mass.; 1820, Boston; 1821 and 1822, Portland, Me.; 1823, Danville, Vt., — a successful year, with an addition of forty to the church; 1824, Barre, Vt.; 1825, Portland district, in the newly-formed Maine Conference. He spent four years on this district, during which its numbers of churches, members and preachers, were nearly doubled. Many remarkable conversions and incidents attended the revivals of these years. Not only were the false opinions, but the physical strength, of strong men often overpowered. "I preached," says Mr. Kilburn, "in a school-house at Rumford, on Bethel circuit; and a young man chopped wood at the door during the whole service, to disturb the exercises. Soon after, we erected a meeting-house there, at the dedication of which I preached. From that time a revival commenced, and for two years, at each Quarterly Meeting, from twenty to fifty were at the altar for prayers. At one time, when inviting persons to come to the altar, I observed a stir in the gallery; many were weeping; and shortly I saw a man coming down, and making his way up the aisle, and uttering loud cries, — 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' On reaching the altar, he fell on his knees, but did not obtain comfort at that time. On the next

evening I preached at a place across the river, some miles from his house. I noticed the same person and his wife in the congregation. After meeting I returned to the village where he resided, and was met by a man, who requested me to go to P—— K——'s. He said that he had just helped him out of his sleigh, for he had no strength to help himself. On entering his house, I found him sitting in a chair, and repeating, in low tones, 'Praised be God — praised be God!' He told me that, on his return from the meeting, as he drove down the bank of the river to the ice, he seemed to himself to be about to sink to hell, and be lost forever, — though he had been a professed Universalist. On reaching the ice, his strength left him; but he held the reins clenched in his hands. His wife did not observe this until, as they approached the house, the horse went towards the barn. She then knew that he had lost his strength, and she called his unconverted neighbors to come and take him out of the sleigh. In his despair he had been converted and comforted. When I heard of him last, he was a faithful Christian. At the next Quarterly Meeting a similar instance occurred. The manifestation of the Divine presence and power was even more remarkable. Parents and children came to the altar, without any previous knowledge of each other's feelings. The companions of our brethren and sisters, and their children, who had long been the subjects of earnest prayer, were found there, in penitence seeking the Saviour. There had been present at the preaching a gentleman of considerable influence in the town — a justice of the peace, whose residence was immediately opposite the church, and was always open for my entertainment. His wife had previously experienced religion, and was a member of our church. Esquire B—— returned home after the close of the sermon, but felt dissatisfied with himself. Something within him said, 'You have done wrong!' He returned to the meeting-house, and took a seat in the gallery, that he might witness the Sacrament. During the administration, one of the ministers, in distributing the bread, said, 'O that we could see Jesus Christ set forth before us, crucified and slain!' This remark thrilled through the soul of Mr. B——, and melted his heart. He found

himself dropping tears upon the people beneath. He attempted to move back, but found that he could not stir. Presently, when the invitation was given to penitents to come to the altar, two young men, who had been recently converted, came to him, took him by the arms, and assisted him down stairs and up to the altar. During this time, his wife, who was weeping in prayer for him, and was not aware of his presence, heard behind her a movement. She looked, and saw her husband, who was crying, 'God have mercy on me! God have mercy on me!' When within about ten feet of the altar, he fell on his knees, and in this posture came the rest of the way. Our meeting, which began at half-past ten o'clock in the forenoon, continued, without intermission, till nine o'clock in the evening. Meetings were held successively for four days, and resulted in the conversion of twenty others, besides Mr. B——."

In 1829 Mr. Kilburn was transferred back to the New England Conference, and made Presiding Elder of the Springfield district, then first formed. He spent but one year in this charge; but it was a period of great prosperity, about eight hundred members being added to the church. The years 1830 and 1831 he spent at Providence, R. I.; 1832, Lowell, Mass.; 1833, Lynn, Mass.; 1834 and 1835, North Bridgewater, Mass.; 1836 and 1837, Providence district; 1838, Boston; 1839, Boston district, which he travelled four years; 1843, Waltham, Mass.; 1844, Westfield, Mass.; 1845 and 1846, Barre mission, Vt.; 1847, Ashburnham, Mass.; 1848, South Royalston, Mass.; 1849 and 1850, Dudley, Mass.

After forty-three years of faithful labors, during which he has enjoyed the fullest confidence and affection of his brethren, he was returned superannuated in 1851.

Mr. Kilburn has nearly passed through his "three-score years and ten," but retains well his vigor. His frame is large; his head well developed; his features round, and expressive of benevolence and calm enjoyment. He has been unwaveringly steadfast in the devotion of his life to the interests of the Gospel. His pulpit discourses have been characterized by good sense and the "unction from the Holy One;" and many have been the seals of his ministry.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LEE REVISITS NEW ENGLAND.

Lee at Norwalk. — Stratford. — New Haven. — In Rhode Island. — Boston and Lynn. — In Maine. — Incidents. — His Return. — His Character. — Example of Wit. — Triumphant Death.

On the 31st of May, 1808, Lee left Baltimore, on a final visit to his old friends and old fields of labor, in New England. He had been absent in the Middle and Southern States about eight years. Many changes had occurred in the east, since his departure. Methodism had enlarged its tents and strengthened its stakes on all hands, and most of its preachers had commenced their travels, during this interval. He proposed to pass rapidly once more over his old tours, to greet in the Lord his old friends, and take his final leave of them till they should meet again in the "building of God, — the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!"

He lingered on his route towards the north, visiting and preaching among the churches, till the latter part of June, when, crossing the Sound, he landed at Norwalk, Ct., the village on whose highway he had preached his first sermon in New England. "He was much gratified," says his biographer, "in saluting, in the name of the Lord Jesus, some of his friends of former days. Almost twenty years had passed away since he first, as a stranger, entered this part of the world. On his first appearance, few were prepossessed in his favor; but his constancy and firmness conquered the prejudices of many. He encountered floods of bigotry and persecution; but he was borne through them all, and lived to see 'the crooked ways made straight and the rough places made even,' and living witnesses in abundance raised up, who could rejoice that ever they heard the Gospel from the mouth of a Methodist minister."

He now hastened on; and his notes by the way are, as usual, very brief, but they afford us intimations of the interest of both himself and his hearers in his visit. On Saturday, July 2nd, he was at Stratfield, where he had formed his first New England Class. A few persons were assembled, to whom he delivered his final charge, and after praying with them, passed on to New Haven, where he put up at "old Brother Jocelyn's," a name memorable to New Haven Methodists. He spent the Sabbath in that city. "At ten o'clock, I preached," he says, "on Zechariah 9: 12. We had a comfortable time together; I preached also at three o'clock, and at night. I had great liberty in speaking, and the people were considerably affected under the word."

On Saturday, he arrived at the residence of his old friend General Lippett, Cranston, R. I., and met "a hearty welcome." On Sabbath he preached twice, and administered the Lord's supper. "We had," he says, "another precious time of the love and the presence of God. Tuesday, 12th, I rode to Providence, and put up at John Lippett's, and at night preached in the town-house. I believe some good was done at that time, and I hope the fruit thereof will be seen after many days. It has been many years since I preached in that town: but I felt something of the same union with the people that I formerly felt. There is now a small society in Providence. The next day I rode early; I stopped a little in Bristol, and travelled on to Newport, and put up with Samuel Merwin, who is our stationed preacher in town. I was pleased at hearing that the Lord was prospering his work in that town, and that some souls were seeking the Lord. Thursday, 14th, I went over to the fort to visit Captain Lloyd Beale, who commands the fort, and who is a steady Methodist. I returned, and just before dark the bell was rung for meeting. I went out to see and hear it, for it was the first bell that I ever saw in a steeple to a Methodist meeting-house. The Methodists and others have united to build a Methodist meeting-house, which is not finished, but is fit to preach in. They have a steeple to it, with a pretty large bell; the house is fitted up with large square pews, so that a part of the people sit with their faces, and others with their backs,

towards the preacher; and these pews are sold to purchasers. Male and female sit together. Is not this a violation of Methodist rules? At night I preached, and we had a good time. The next day I tarried in town, and visited many of my former acquaintances; and at night, in our new meeting-house, I preached on John 16: 22. The house was much crowded, and the people were all attention, and many were bathed in tears. I warned them, and entreated them, as though I was never more to see them. I hope the blessing of the Lord will attend them. Saturday, 16th, I preached in Portsmouth, in our meeting-house. I had a precious weeping time amongst my old friends. The word took hold upon their hearts, and they wept freely. I was truly thankful to God for the meeting. I spent the Sabbath in Bristol, in which place there has been a revival of religion of late. They have built a good meeting-house, but not on the Methodist plan; for they have sold the seats, and men and women sit together."

On Thursday, 21st, he reached Boston, and was welcomed by his old friends with much emotion. They assembled "in the old meeting-house" to hear him, the same evening, and he preached to them from 2 Cor. 5: 16. "I found," he says, "a sweet sense of the love of God in my soul, and the people were quite attentive. The next day I tarried in town, and at night in the new meeting-house [Bromfield-st.] I preached on Rom. 8: 24. I did not feel as much freedom in this house as I did in the old. This new meeting-house is large and elegant, — I think eighty-four by sixty-four. It has an altar round the pulpit, in a half-circle, and the house is fixed with long pews, of a circular form, to be uniform with the altar. The front of the gallery is of the same form. It looks very handsome, and will contain an abundance of people; but is not on the Methodist plan, for the pews are sold to the highest bidder."

"Old Bromfield-street" is still precious in the regards of Boston Methodists. It has been renovated, and is now one of the best church edifices in the metropolis.

On Saturday, 23d, he was received with warmth among his former associates at Lynn, many of whom were converted under

his ministrations, and had borne with him the burden and heat of the day. They called on him at the parsonage, in the evening. The next day being the Sabbath, he preached to them in the morning, with much effect, from Isaiah 33 : 13. "It was an affecting time. At three o'clock I preached, and the house was much thronged. The Lord was with us. And also at six o'clock my soul was much comforted in speaking to the people, and many wept under the word. When I put the brethren in mind of my first coming amongst them, and the difficulties that I, as well as they, had to go through, they could not forbear weeping. I could but hope that a blessing would follow that meeting. I have not been so well pleased, for a long time, at meeting my old friends, as I was at this place."

On Thursday, 29th, he reached Portsmouth, N. H., and "preached in the old meeting-house belonging to the Universalists. I had a crowded house, owing to a previous notice being given that one of our preachers on that night would preach on a particular subject: however, he gave place to me, and I found a good degree of freedom in speaking, and was glad to be there. Two of our preachers were in town; they have just begun to preach in that place, and intend to continue it every Sabbath; and, withal, they contemplate purchasing the old meeting-house, in which I preached, if they can. It has a bell and a steeple, and is fitted up with pews. The next day I crossed the river into the Province of Maine, and rode on through York to Kennebec, and stayed all night at Barnard's tavern."

He was now in the old field of his hardest conflicts, where, amidst Borean storms, and scarcely endurable privations, he had planted the germs of Methodism. The people flocked to hear him. "In the north part of Gloucester," he writes, Aug. 3d, "I preached, and I had a great many of my old acquaintances to hear me; and the congregation was so large that we were forced to go into the woods to hold our meeting. I was greatly pleased and comforted among my friends. Many in the neighborhood have been converted, in the course of a few months past. Bless the Lord for his goodness!"

He passed on to Monmouth, the seat of the first Methodist

society in Maine, where the multitude still crowded to hear him, with eager interest. On Saturday, 7th, he preached to them from Heb. 7: 12. "I had," he writes, "a good degree of liberty in speaking to the people; and it was a melting time with many of the hearers, and the word reached their hearts. Joshua Soule exhorted a while, and concluded. At half after one, I held forth again, on James 1: 12. We had another good meeting. The congregation was uncommonly large, and many were forced to stay out of doors, for the want of room. It was said, by many, that they never saw so great a collection of people before, except at a Conference. Just before night I attended a prayer-meeting at Brother Fogg's,* and after several persons had prayed, I prayed, and then spoke a little to the people, and told them I wished that *all* who would engage from that time to try and serve God, and meet me in heaven, would come and give me their hands, in token of it; many came and gave me their hands, and wept, and I could not refrain from weeping. Glory to God for that visit of love! Monday, 8th, I preached at a school-house in Winthrop. I had more people to hear me than could get in the house; and many of them wept heartily under the word. There was great reason to hope that much good was done. Thank God, I have had much of the presence and love of God with me every day for some time. Many of my former friends, who have grown rather careless, flock out to hear me; and some of them say they will try again to be more engaged with God than what they have been heretofore."

Sunday, 21st, he spent at Orrington, where his visit was attended with extraordinary interest. In the morning he preached from Matt. 25: 10. "I had," he says, "a large company of people to hear me, and I spoke with great freedom and faith; and the hearers felt the power of the word. Then, at half after two o'clock, I preached to a crowded assembly. When I called upon them to remember former days, when I first visited them, about fifteen years before, which was the first time they ever heard a Methodist preacher, many of them were bathed in

*The Rev. Caleb Fogg, noticed in this volume.

tears; for many of them, both parents and children, had been converted under the preaching of the Methodists. It was indeed a most solemn time, and my soul was much quickened and blessed. I could truly say, *it was good to be there.* In the afternoon I preached at Paul Nickerson's. My text was Psa. 145: 20. I had a crowded house; the Spirit of the Lord God came upon me while I was speaking, and I wept, and the people wept greatly. It was the best meeting that we had had together in that place. When I dismissed the people, I told them that I was about to leave them, and had but little expectation of ever preaching in that place again. I told them I would be glad for all, who were determined to try and meet me in heaven, whether they were converted or not, to come and give me their hands. Many of them came and gave me their hands, and with streaming eyes begged my prayers, and wished my welfare. Several came who had never been converted, and, crying aloud, said they would try to get to heaven, if they could. I have no doubt but a lasting blessing will follow this meeting. Monday, 22d, I turned my course back towards my native country, being then about one thousand miles from home. I crossed Penobscot river to Hampden; and in the meeting-house at three o'clock, I preached on John 7: 7. We had a good meeting, and were comforted together. I found some who feared God in this place, among whom are some who say that they were awakened and brought to God by means of my preaching, in former years. I lodged at Brother Joseph Baker's, a travelling minister. Tuesday, 23d, I rode to the Twenty-five Mile Pond, which is now a thickly-settled country most part of the way through; but when I first travelled the road, about fifteen years ago, there was not a house to be seen for twenty miles. The country has been wonderfully improved of late years. I came to the Twenty-five Mile Pond, in Unity, and preached at four o'clock. I had a tolerably good time; but they were not notified of my coming until some friends from a distance came into the neighborhood. I lodged at John Chaise's that night. Wednesday, 24th, I rode early, and went through Clinton, crossed Kennebec river, and on to Fairfield meeting-house; in

all about twenty-six miles. I preached at three o'clock, and enjoyed a comfortable season; but felt weak and faint from long fasting. Sunday, 28th, at our meeting-house in Farmington, I preached at half-past ten o'clock, on Isaiah 33: 13. I had a precious meeting, and the congregation was very large, insomuch that there was not room in the house to contain the people. It was a melting time indeed, and the people wept in every part of the house. Then we had the Lord's supper, and a great many communicants, together with twelve preachers. The people were greatly affected at the table, and many of the spectators who tarried in the house wept freely. I was pleased and surprised to see such a crowd of people at the Lord's table. When I first came among them, about fifteen years ago, they had never seen a Methodist, and many of them were afraid that they were a dangerous set of men; but at this time we have nine local preachers, and, I suppose, about one hundred persons to commune with us. Surely, the Lord hath done great things for us. At half-past one o'clock I preached again, on Psa. 1: 23. The people were greatly wrought upon by the word. Allen H. Cobb exhorted, and concluded. I then had a sorrowful parting with many of my old friends, whom I never expected to see again." — "The next day, he preached in Vienna, to an attentive congregation, from whom he parted with regret. In this place he had preached in former days. The labors of himself and of those who succeeded him had been greatly owned of God. 'The society was large and lively.' From Vienna, he visited Strong, near Sandy river, a place which he had visited about eight years before. He then went on, through Jay and Livermore, Readfield, Durham, Portland, and Scarboro'; and leaving the District of Maine, he entered the State of New Hampshire, and taking Dover in his way, went to Barrington. He had been in the District of Maine forty-three days, during which time he had preached forty-seven sermons; and, to use his own words, 'had seen very few dry or barren meetings.' 'The visit,' continues he, 'was the most profitable and pleasing of any I had ever made in that part of the world.' He also visited Poplin, Sandown, and Plastow,

where he finished his labors in New Hampshire, having been in it five days, and preached seven sermons."

By Wednesday, Sept. 14th, he had returned to Lynn, where he delivered to the church his final exhortations, and "had a sorrowful parting from his old friends." After spending a few days in Boston, he passed into the interior, through Waltham, Ware, and Wilbraham, to Hartford, Ct., where he preached "in the old play-house, in the morning and in the afternoon; 'but (he remarks) there is a very poor prospect of doing good in that place, by our preachers.'"

After spending six days and preaching seven sermons in Connecticut, he reached Garrettson's "Traveller's Rest," at Rhinebeck, on Friday, the 30th. Thus ended Lee's personal connection with Methodism in New England. His historical connection with it will last, we trust, till the consummation of all things. He survived this visit about eight years, during which he continued to labor indefatigably for the church in the Middle and Southern States. His appointments were, in 1809, Brunswick circuit; 1810, Presiding Elder of Meherin district; 1811, Amelia circuit; 1812, Richmond; 1813, Brunswick; 1814, Cumberland and Manchester; 1815, Meherin district; 1816, Annapolis,—all within the original Baltimore Conference. During these eight years he occasionally extended his travels to remote parts of the south, and down to the last year of his life he was characterized by the unresting missionary spirit which prompted his earlier labors. He was, during several years, chaplain to the Congress of the United Sates, and preached before the legislators of the nation with the same simplicity and power which attended his ministrations in the frontier wilderness, or on the highway.

His character has been too amply, though indirectly, illustrated, in the course of our narrative,* to require many additional remarks. We cannot, however, take our final leave of him, without lingering a few moments in the contemplation of his rare career.

He is the great man who achieves great results by great endeavors. History will accord to Lee no ordinary share of

* See Mem. of Int. of Methodism, &c.

such a fame. He possessed no preëminent intellectual faculty. His literary attainments were not above mediocrity; his only publication, — the "Short History of the Methodists," — though invaluable for its data, makes no pretensions whatever, except to industrious research and accuracy. His opinions on great ecclesiastical measures would not, we think, entitle him to the claim of superior legislative sagacity. But, with a good practical judgment for ordinary affairs, considerable general intelligence, a remarkably simple and pertinent Saxon style, strong sensibilities, which were easily kindled in discourse, and a rare native faculty of wit, he combined an executive energy which has few parallels in our annals, and in which he was exceeded by no character in our history, except Wesley, Asbury, and, it may be, Garrettson. This energy was not impulsive; it was singularly cool and continuous. Its calmness was its most intrinsic and valuable trait. His great travels, his incessant preaching, the imperturbable persistence with which he brooked opposition and all obstacles, continually and tranquilly repeating his endeavors against them until they disappeared, — these characteristics, distinguishing a ministry of thirty-three years, mark him as no ordinary man.

The great results which have followed his labors will always entitle him to the reputation of greatness. His agency in the founding of Methodism in New England will, as heretofore remarked, place him among the chief characters in the ecclesiastical history of these Eastern States. The cause which he here planted has already become, numerically, the second religious denomination of New England. He entered New England in 1789, a solitary stranger; when he fell, in 1816, it was traversed by more than one hundred Itinerant ministers. He formed its first Methodist Class, of three members. When he fell, Methodist societies dotted the land from Long Island to Canada, and from New York to New Brunswick. When he joined the church, it comprised less than 1200 members and ten preachers; when he died, it reported more than 214,000 members, and nearly 700 preachers.

Methodism in New England is yet strenuous with all the elements of progress, and will probably continue to advance pro-

portionately to its past growth. As years develop and extend it, the historical relation which Lee bears to it must become increasingly illustrious. His was the happiness, not only of ability for great achievements, but of the fortunate time, the opportune circumstances, which render such ability ostensible through ages, but which only occasionally favor even the noblest talents.

His character was preëminently that of a missionary, — an evangelist. To *labor*, to *advance*, were his ambition. One horse would not suffice for his progress; he often led another for a relay. He could not be content with two or three sermons a week; what was ordinarily the weekly amount of preaching with others, was to him but a daily task. His preaching was replete with the energy and zeal which prompted his whole course. It was often overwhelmingly powerful, sometimes smiting down hosts of robust men to the earth. It was almost always pathetic, constraining himself and his hearers to tears.

With his deep devotion, the directness and unresting energy of his course, and the tenderness of his sensibility, was combined an extraordinary propensity to wit. We have repeatedly remarked on this fact, and endeavored to explain its cause. It seems, indeed, to have been a general characteristic of the early Methodist preachers, and was partly attributable to their Itinerant mode of life, and their familiar intercourse with almost all varieties of society. With Lee it was not often abused; it had even its advantages: it gave him a *bonhommie* which facilitated his reception among strangers; it gave an air of good-humor to many of the vexations and trials of his career, and not unfrequently it became a keen weapon of defence against the many gainsayers whom his peculiar mode of preaching and of life could hardly fail to challenge to experiments of merriment. His memoirs abound in incidents of the kind. An example may not be irrelevant here, especially as it occurred within New England. As he was riding on horseback, one day, between Boston and Lynn, he was overtaken by two young lawyers, who knew that he was a Methodist preacher, and were disposed to amuse themselves somewhat at his expense. Saluting him, and rang-

ing their horses one on either side of him, they entered into a conversation something like the following:

1*st Lawyer*. I believe you are a preacher, sir?

Lee. Yes; I generally pass for one.

1*st Law*. You preach very often, I suppose?

Lee. Generally every day; frequently twice, or more.

2*d Law*. How do you find time to study, when you preach so often?

Lee. I study when riding, and read when resting.

1*st Law*. But do you not write your sermons?

Lee. No; not very often.

2*d Law*. Do you not often make mistakes, in preaching extemporaneously?

Lee. I do, sometimes.

2*d Law*. How do you do then? Do you correct them?

Lee. That depends upon the character of the mistake. I was preaching the other day, and I went to quote the text, "All *liars* shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone;" and, by mistake, I said, "All *lawyers* shall have their part—"

2*d Law*. (*interrupting him*). What did you do with that? Did you correct it?

Lee. O, no, indeed! It was so nearly true, I did n't think it worth while to correct it.

"Humph!" said one of them (with a hasty and impatient glance at the other), "I don't know whether you are the more a knave or a fool!"—"Neither," he quietly replied, turning at the same time his mischievous eyes from one to the other; "I believe I am just *between* the two!" Finding they were measuring wit with one of its masters, and excessively mortified at their discomfiture, the knights of the green bag drove ahead, leaving the victor to solitude and his own reflections.*

After travelling and laboring in the ministry, as he has himself said, "from St. Mary's river in Georgia, to Passamaquoddy Bay in Maine," he departed to the church triumphant, on the 12th of September, 1816. The venerable Henry Boehm, who

* "Life and Times," by Rev. Dr. L. M. Lee.

attended his last hours, gives the following account of them: "He came over to our camp-meeting near Hillsboro' (on the eastern shore of Maryland), which began the 21st of August. Thursday, the 22d, he preached a profitable sermon from 1 Peter 2: 5, — 'Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house,' &c. Saturday, 24th, at three o'clock, he preached on 2 Peter 3: 18, — 'But grow in grace,' which was his last text, and ended his public labors. A large, attentive, serious, and much affected congregation, will not soon forget the sermon and feelings on that memorable occasion. The same evening he was taken with a chill, that was succeeded by a fever, which continued to the close of his life. On Sunday morning, 25th, he was removed to Hillsboro', to the house of Brother Sellers, where every attention by physicians and friends was given; but all proved ineffectual. Through the first part of his illness, his mind was much weighed down, so that he spake but little. On Tuesday night, September 10th, he broke out in ecstasies of joy. Also on Wednesday, 11th, about nine o'clock, A. M., he delivered himself in words like these; 'Glory! glory! glory! Hallelujah! Jesus reigns.' On the same evening he spoke nearly twenty minutes, deliberately and distinctly. Among other things, he directed me to write to his brother, and let him know he died happy in the Lord. 'Give my respects to Bishop M'Kendree,' said he, 'and tell him that I die in love with all the preachers; that I love him, and that he lives in my heart.' Then he took his leave of all present, — six or seven in number, — and requested us to pray. This solemn night will never be forgotten by me. After this he spake but little. Thursday, the 12th, in the early part of the day, he lost his speech, but appeared to retain his reason. Thus he continued to linger till the same evening, about half-past seven o'clock, when, without a sigh or groan, he expired, with his eyes seemingly fixed on the prize." *

Thus departed the founder of Methodism in these Eastern States, as the sun departs over our western New England hills, leaving their summits bright, and the whole atmosphere suffused with his light.

* Minutes, 1817.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PROGRESS AND INCIDENTS OF 1808–9.

Maine. — New Hampshire. — Newell meditating in a Snow-drift. — Incidents. — Washburn and Bonney on the New London Circuit. — Anecdotes. — Boston District. — Statistics. — General Conference.

THE present was a year of unusual numerical growth in the church. In Maine, Joshua Soule and Oliver Beale guided, with much success, the labors of twenty-two Itinerants, among whom were Hillman, Munger, Cobb, Martin, Steele, Kilburn and Fogg. They added two circuits to their already extensive field, and more than four hundred members to their Classes. The joint returns of the two districts of the province amounted to 3224.

Elijah Hedding concluded his labors, this year, on the New Hampshire district, where he had superintended the travels of William Hunt, Lewis Bates, Ebenezer Blake and others. They passed through severe struggles and privations, and made no remarkable progress. The gains of the district fell short of fifty. An additional circuit had, however, been formed, and the Divine Spirit was poured out in some places. Ebenezer F. Newell and Lewis Bates labored hard, but successfully, on Tuftonboro' circuit. "To rise early," says the former, "read and pray a few hours, take breakfast, have family worship, and then pass on, from house to house, from appointment to appointment, as our custom was, we found to be laborious, wearing and tiresome work; but the Lord was with us, and gave us to see scores of sinners converted to God; and their songs of praise cheered us in the glorious work."

He relates many adventures and perils, which were characteristic of our Itinerancy in those days. At a certain time, he was nearly two hours passing through a snow-drift, which was four

or five feet deep. "I dismounted," he says, "and made my way through, ahead of my horse, as far as I could, without letting go of the bridle-rein; and then he would leap and wallow up to me, and wait until I had again made him a track. The storm was so severe that I found it difficult, at times, to catch my breath, and our path was filled as fast as we left it."

Such were not unusual scenes with our preachers in the wintry circuits of the north. Mr. Newell had some characteristic, and, as he calls them, "rich and refreshing meditations," while in this dolorous plight. "Among them," he says, "was the following dialogue: — *Q.* Who is that up to his arms in the snow? *A.* A Methodist preacher. *Q.* Who is that in a snug study, by his warm fire? *A.* The honorable settled minister. *Q.* What is the Methodist preacher doing? *A.* Making his way to his appointment, where he hopes to call sinners to repentance. *Q.* What is the settled minister doing? *A.* Hunting his library over, selecting portions, and adding, perhaps, some of his own thoughts, and writing out a sermon to read over to the people next Sabbath. *Q.* Which of them looks most like a lazy man; and which gets the most money, the most reproaches, or follows the example of Christ and the apostles nearest, in travelling, suffering, preaching, self-denyings, watchings, fastings, and winning souls to Christ? Here my mind looked back, and saw Jesus, weary, sitting on Jacob's well, Paul tossing on the rolling waves and shipwrecked on Miletus, and John on the desolate isle of Patmos. And my full soul cried out, in the midst of the tempest, O Lord, permit me to wear out in thy service!"

Such were the trials and such the spirit of these remarkable men. "On the plains of Rochester," he adds, "the Lord wrought powerfully. Many were converted to God. — Our last Quarterly Meeting was held in Tuftonboro'. The Divine presence was seen and felt, especially in the Love Feast, and at the communion, after which mourners were invited forward. They filled the altar, and several were prayed for in other parts of the house; for such was the crowd and anxiety of the people, that they could not come forward, and were unnoticed by those in the altar. The cries for mercy, sighs, and shouts of joy, were

such, that one mingled cry, for an hour or more, arose as sweet incense before the Throne of Mercy. Many found pardon, and went down to their houses, justified, praising God."

There was no great progress on the Vermont district, though Thomas Branch, and his faithful assistants, Virgin, Sias, Wells, &c., had been instant in season and out of season. Their gains were scarcely twenty-five.

Elijah R. Sabin superintended the New London district, with success. Bonney, Lambord, Washburn, Clark, and some seven others, travelled under his supervision. They reported a membership of 1785, and had increased more than 300 during the year. The session of the Conference at New London left a deep impression upon that city; a reformation ensued, which lasted through most of the year, and spread over much of the New London circuit. Washburn, who, with Bonney, travelled the circuit, says: "The respectable people of the city were convinced, and acknowledged the work to be wrought by the finger of Almighty God; and there was no foundation on which the rabble could stand to raise a persecution. It was no uncommon thing to see from ten to twenty on the floor, slain by the power of God, while the cries of the wounded and the praises of the redeemed were commingling together, in as perfect harmony as two parts of a well-composed piece of psalmody, — filling the house and ascending up to heaven. One Saturday evening, when my colleague was present, I commenced leading a Class; and, as one of the members was speaking of her holy comforts, Bro. Bonney fell to the floor, to all appearance as lifeless as a body from which the spirit had fled. In less than ten minutes, not fewer than twenty lay helpless on the floor. Some lay one hour, some three, and some five. One young lady, whose reputation stood high, both in the church and among those who were without, was insensible fifty-two hours; and when she recovered, and sat down to a table to take some refreshment, declared that she felt no difference in the state of her appetite from what she ordinarily felt when she rose in the morning and sat down to breakfast. Bro. Bonney, having stayed at the Class-meeting, was under the necessity of riding to Norwich the

next morning before meeting: but it prepared him well to preach Scriptural holiness when he got there. At a prayer-meeting, which commenced on Sabbath evening, two young persons fell to the floor, and lay seventy hours. Meeting was kept up during the whole time, and souls were awakened and converted, and several experienced the blessing of sanctification. People of all classes were continually coming and going; and I did not hear of any one attributing the work to any other agency than that of the Spirit of God." We have frequently had occasion to narrate similar marvels. As unquestionable facts, illustrative of the times, they should be put upon record, though inexplicable by our present knowledge of the human mind.

John Brodhead had charge of nearly a score of laborers on Boston district, among whom were Pickering (who travelled this year as a missionary), Webb, Ruter, Merrill, Kibby and Merwin. They enlarged their field on every hand, and returned 2045 members, — an increase, during the year, of 461. There were now two churches and 337 Methodists in the metropolis. Lynn reported 116 members, and Nantucket 158.

On Ashgrove and Rhinebeck districts there were also large additions. Almost every circuit reported gains. The membership of the New England Conference proper amounted, at the close of the year, to 10,096; it had advanced 1271 since the previous returns. If we add the returns of the New England circuits pertaining to the New York Conference, the aggregate number of Methodists in New England (exclusive of the preachers) amounted to 15,798, and the aggregate increase of the year to 1968 — the largest gain of any one year since the introduction of Methodism into the Eastern States. The total membership of the denomination in the United States and Canada was 163,038, and the total increase 11,043. The number of travelling preachers in the entire connection was about 600.

The fifth General Conference was held at Baltimore the present year. It is chiefly important for the measures by which it virtually reörganized itself, and became thereafter a delegated body. These measures are embodied in what are now called the Restrictive Rules of the discipline. Before this organic

change, the Philadelphia and Baltimore Conferences, by their proximity to the usual seat of the General Conference, "included more than one-half its members."* William McKendree was elected bishop, at this session, in the place of Whatcoat. The Conference included one hundred and thirty preachers. Lee says: "There was a good deal of peace and union among them, and from all that I could learn from different parts of our connection, there was a wonderful revival of religion after the preachers returned from the General Conference to their circuits."

* Lee's "Short History." Anno 1808.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

EARLY CHURCHES.

Church at Newport, R. I. — Its Early History. — Trials. — Joel Knight. — Providence, R. I. — First Class. — Early History. — Success. — New Bedford. — John Hawes. — Progress. — Marblehead. — Lee's First Visit. — Ebenezer Martin. — The Formation of the Society. — Ezekiel Cooper. — James Bowler. — Curious Dream. — Trials. — Chapel. — Remarkable Revival. — Subsequent Progress.

BEFORE the present century the pioneers of Methodism visited NEWPORT, R. I.,* and notwithstanding the ground was preöccupied by Baptists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians, who, with one consent, condemned the followers of Wesley as fanatics and preachers of "*strange doctrines*," they were kindly received and respectfully listened to; the word took effect, and souls were converted to God. In 1807, Capt. James Perry, then a man of wealth and influence, Capt. Lloyd Beale, of the United States army, also a faithful soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a firm Methodist, together with several other citizens (some of whom still survive), obtained from the General Assembly of Rhode Island an act incorporating "the Methodist Episcopal church and congregation in Newport," and commenced the erection of the present house of worship. This effort, though sustained by a large share of wealth and influence, for a young society, was, nevertheless, a labor of no ordinary magnitude. Capt. Perry, the leader in the measure, was unfortunate in his business; and as another individual, from whom the world had a right to expect better things, was unfaithful, the society was seriously embarrassed, but finally struggled so far successfully as to finish the chapel. Capt. Perry was induced to assume this responsibility only as a friend of Methodism; and when adversity came, and the world frowned, and sickness laid its paralyzing hand upon him,

*We are indebted to Benj. Mumford, Esq., for most of our sketch of the church at Newport, R. I.

God remembered his generous efforts, and he *was not forgotten by his Saviour*. There was hope in his death. The edifice thus erected was at that time the best Methodist chapel in the Eastern States. It was pewed, and surmounted with a steeple; facts which, though common to New England churches, seemed fearfully ominous to the humble and simple-hearted laborers of Methodism. Asbury and Lee looked upon it with forebodings, which they did not fail to record in their Journals, as we have seen.

Reuben Hubbard was its first preacher; he was succeeded by Samuel Merwin. The venerable Daniel Webb followed, and, after serving the society faithfully and acceptably for two years, was, at the earnest solicitations of the church and congregation, induced to locate. Under the administration of Mr. Webb, the church was blessed with several gracious revivals; but as a large portion of the congregation were wealthy, worldly, and opposed to revivals, and as the influence of long-established sects was brought to bear upon them from within as well as without, these seasons of apparent prosperity were, in general, far more advantageous to other sects than to their own. Converts, in those days, were easily proselyted; and, so far from being considered disgraceful, proselytism seemed to be approved, as by general consent.

Mr. Webb, after a residence of several years at Newport, again joined the Conference, and was succeeded by the venerable Enoch Mudge, Samuel Norris, Stephen Puffer, and Asa Kent, all of whom were instrumental of much good. Mr. Kent was very popular, and was daily gaining influence with the people, when the unfortunate trial of Ephraim K. Avery took place; and, notwithstanding the wisdom, moderation and firmness, of Mr. Kent, the disturbance in the church, moved by public opinion without, bore down with irresistible force, and threatened, for a season, the complete annihilation of the society; but the church, being founded upon the rock Christ Jesus, though much enfeebled, remained true to itself, and, after the Sanballats and Tobiahs had deserted, commenced repairing its breaches. In less than two years, under the labors of Rev. John Lord, who

succeeded Mr. Kent, the congregation enjoyed a season of revival, and Methodism again promised to bless the place with its influence; but it was destined to be further tested, and as by fire. The trials it had survived, it would seem, should have touched the sympathies of a good man; but the successor of Mr. Lord felt it compatible with his sense of humanity and religion to desert and involve again in deep affliction his struggling brethren, for a place in "the true church," and the honor of the "Apostolic succession." "Mr. Lord," writes our authority, "was succeeded by a foreign adventurer, who cared more for a fleece than a flock; the good work effected was counteracted, and we were reduced lower than ever. This second secession, though not so extensive as the one first alluded to, was by far more discouraging, being effected by a preacher whose professions of attachment were loudest and most frequent after his bargain for desertion had been concluded. It was equally discouraging to have a few of those who had stood firm in the former trial now join the deserters, and help to tear down that which they had labored so successfully to sustain. Alas! poor human nature, how frail, how uncertain! To-day it is hosanna to the Son of David; — to-morrow, crucify him. This was the darkest day in our history. The church and congregation, reduced to a mere handful, was almost without hope, and it did seem as if we must soon cease to exist; but again fervent prayer was offered,— was heard, and the enemy disappointed. At this time the Conference sent us the Rev. Thomas Ely, a young man of faith, piety and perseverance. He was succeeded by Rev. Jonathan Cady, whose labors were always acceptable, and who enabled us to enlarge our vestry so much that 'hope again revived.' Isaac Stoddard next took charge of us, and under him the church was much refreshed and encouraged. Mr. Stoddard was not only a man of deep piety, but a thorough Methodist, — one who knew how *to live* the character, as well as to explain it. The trials of this dear brother, while with us, were many and serious; but his faith in God was strong, and he will ever live in the hearts of the brethren he so faithfully served. Mr. Franklin Gavett succeeded Mr. Stoddard, and, during both years he spent in New-

port, his ministry was owned and blessed in the awakening and conversion of souls. Mr. Gavett also had his trials, but he also has a place in our affections. In June, 1842, Rev. Joel Knight commenced his labors here. It was at a time when the very worst passions of the human heart were most excited by politics that this beloved brother appeared as a messenger of mercy to the people; and, by a course as wise as it was conciliatory, succeeded in gaining the confidence of the most opposite, — not by any debasing sycophancy, but by an open, candid, firm and affectionate course. Mr. Knight was a man of untiring industry, strong faith, deep piety, active benevolence, — zealous, charitable, and indomitable. Circumstances, however bright, could not infatuate, nor, however dark, intimidate him. Trusting in the goodness of the cause in which he was engaged, and knowing God was able to accomplish all things which were for his own glory, he implicitly relied upon his Saviour for success in all he did. It was the same thing with him to decide as it was to execute. He would do neither without prayer, nor give up his object while a gleam of hope remained. He came to Newport (to use his own emphatic language) 'to do good; and I will never leave it without leaving an influence behind me. I do not expect to live long, — I do not desire to; but so long as God enables me to labor, I will labor for the salvation of my dying fellow-men; and rather than leave your beautiful island without doing good, without seeing a revival of God's work, let my head rest forever in your ancient burial-place.' It was not long before these nervous exhortations excited the people to hear him, the enemy to slander him, and lukewarm professors to censure him; but God was with him, and owned and blessed his labors. Such a revival was never known in this community as that which was effected through his instrumentality. It is not alone his success as a revival minister that makes the memory of this departed brother so dear to us. It was his faith, perseverance, encouragement, and industry, that has enabled us, poor as we were, to contemplate and effect extensive improvements in our condition. Without the privilege of naming a single individual of wealth, either in the church or congregation, upon whom he could

expect to lean, he conceived and effected all that either himself or his brethren could expect or even desire."

Besides the great moral effect of Mr. Knight's labors, he projected and completed an entire renovation of the chapel, which had fallen much into decay. It was modernized, newly furnished, and reöpened by his successor, Rev. Robert H. Hatfield, under whose ministrations the good presages of Mr. Knight's labors were more than realized. Rev. B. Otheman followed Mr. Hatfield, and his labors were accompanied with great usefulness.

Thus did this well-tried society stand through its dark days. Like most of our early churches, the Lord so loved it as to chasten it. During its trials, good and true men were always found cleaving to its altar, — men who will assuredly have their reward. The society has been favored with the pastoral care of effective men; and is destined, we hope, to still brighter days of prosperity. It now reports nearly two hundred and fifty members.

Methodist preachers frequently visited the city of PROVIDENCE, R. I., in the latter part of the last century. We have had occasion to quote repeated references of Lee and Asbury to the inauspicious prospects of Methodism there. Joshua Hall took up his abode in the city, as a pioneer of the cause, in the year 1798. He taught school for a support, but preached laboriously on the Sabbath, and at other times. On the 24th of November, in the same year, he organized a Methodist Class; it consisted of but five persons, all of whom, except one, were females. They were, Amey Remington, Mehitable Potter, Martha Clark, Shubal Cady and wife, and Annie Cady. The Class met at Amey Remington's house during more than thirty years, and prayer-meetings were sustained at Martha Clark's for about twenty years. Methodist services were maintained regularly from the date of Mr. Hall's labors, though no regular preacher was sent to the city until some years after. One of the subsequent pastors of the Providence church* has furnished the following items of its later history:

"Rev. Joseph Snelling administered the ordinance of baptism

*Rev. Ralph W. Allen.

May, 1801, and Rev. John Finnegan administered the sacrament of the Lord's supper to twelve persons, on the 28th of August following,— being the first instances in which these ordinances were administered by Methodist ministers in Providence. The first Quarterly Meeting was held in the town-house, August 12th and 13th, 1803. The much-beloved George Pickering preached on the occasion with great effect. In the spring and summer of 1804, the meetings were very thinly attended; and the Rev. Epaphras Kibby, who was then preaching to the feeble society, became well-nigh discouraged. Circumstances, at this time, wore no very flattering aspect. But God had better things in reserve for his people. In July, 1815, Rev. Van Renselaer Osborn commenced his labors in the city. The Spirit was poured out in a glorious manner. Many were brought to the knowledge of the truth. Mr. Osborn met with much opposition; but he persevered, and his ministry was crowned with glorious success. In September, the society numbered thirty-three members. Soon, it was found necessary, for its accommodation, that a house of worship should be erected; and accordingly efforts were immediately made for the purpose. A chapel was erected on the corner of Aboon and Washington streets, and dedicated to God on the 8th of June, 1816. The society, at this time, consisted of about one hundred and eleven members. Mr. Osborn was stationed there in 1816. In 1817 and 1818 Solomon Sias was the stationed preacher; in 1819, Moses Fifield. The society continued to prosper. Bartholomew Otheman took charge of it in 1820, and continued two years. His labors were signally owned of God, in the awakening and conversion of sinners. Large accessions were made to the society. Soon the house, but recently erected, became quite too small, and it was found that a more commodious one must be built. A valuable lot of land, on the corner of Clifford and Chestnut streets, was given to the society for the purpose, by Daniel Field, Esq. On the 6th of August, 1821, the corner-stone of the new church was laid; and on the 1st day of January, 1822, the house was dedicated to the worship of God. It is sixty-five by seventy-five feet, gallery on three sides, with two commodious vestries,

and it has now a steeple and bell. It is a capacious edifice, neat and plain, centrally located, and every way adapted to the object of its erection."

Since Mr. Otheman's successful labors, many of the veterans of Methodism have occupied this station, among whom have been Mudge, Merritt, Kent, Kilburn, Fillemore, A. D. Merrill, and others. The church has had its periods of trial; it would have been an anomaly in the history of Methodism if it had not, for it has pleased God to invigorate our cause, in almost all its localities, by the discipline of severe trials. Yet the brethren of Providence have been found faithful, and have advanced with a steady progress.

They have witnessed many outpourings of the Spirit, and very gracious revivals. In 1833 fifty persons were dismissed from the old society to form a new church; they erected the present commodious Power-street chapel. In 1841 about fifty members organized another society, but they dissolved their connection with the M. E. church, and became the "First Wesleyan society formed in New England." In October, 1848, detachments from both the Chestnut-street and Power-street societies formed a third church. After worshipping some time in a hall, they erected a new chapel on Mathewson-street, which was dedicated in May, 1851, and is one of the best ecclesiastical structures in the city. A fourth M. E. church has also been organized, under promising auspices. There were returned from the city of Providence, in 1850, between six and seven hundred Methodists.

Previous to the year 1812, Fairhaven and Acushnet village (commonly called The Head of the River) were known as parts of New Bedford, and formed but one township. Methodism in this region was first planted in what is now called the *Head of the River;* although, in the Minutes of 1806, and many following years, the appointment is called New Bedford;* and from that scion of the Lord's planting the several societies in New Bedford, Fairhaven and Dartmouth, have originated, to

*Letter of B. Pitman, Esq., to the author. We are indebted to Mr. Pitman for our information respecting Methodism in New Bedford.

which number we might, also, with propriety, add Westport. In giving the early history of Methodism in New Bedford, it is therefore needful also to give a brief account of its introduction into the former place.

Methodism at the Head of the River, in its origin, as well as in its growth and early history, is intimately connected with the life, the labors and Christian zeal, of John Hawes, Esq. This gentleman, in earlier life, was engaged in practical navigation, and in his commercial pursuits visited most of the great maritime cities of Europe. While in the city of London, he left his lodgings, one Sabbath day, with the design of finding a place of religious worship. With that intention, as he was passing a narrow alley, his attention was attracted by the sound of vocal music. Turning to the place from which the sounds issued, he found a congregation engaged in the worship of God. He entered, and seating himself with them, listened attentively to the Gospel of salvation. The hour was an auspicious one in his life; his mind was enlightened by the truth delivered, and his heart affected by the gracious influence of the Divine Spirit which attended it. In consequence of that occasion, he was led to seek the salvation of his soul. On returning to his lodgings, he inquired concerning the people with whom he had worshipped, and was informed that they were Methodists. From that hour to the close of his life, he was warmly attached to the denomination, though some years elapsed before he had much personal acquaintance with them. When advanced in life, he relinquished his former pursuits, and located himself at the Head of the River, and was an efficient instrument in planting and fostering Methodism in that place.

In 1805 he learned that a stranger was in the vicinity, who called himself Epaphras Kibby, and professed to be a Methodist minister. He made immediate arrangements, and gave him an invitation to preach in the Congregational meeting-house, a large and somewhat dilapidated building, and at that time vacated. The invitation was accepted, and a sermon preached, which was probably the first delivered by a Methodist clergyman in that village, although the Rev. Jesse Lee had preached in New Bed-

ford, several years before, and Joshua Hall, Joseph Snelling, Daniel Webb, and some others, had preached at Mr. Ellis Mendall's, and in his neighborhood, a few miles from the Head of the River, on the way to Sandwich. The meeting was followed by others, and so graciously did the Lord bless the labors of his servant, that, at the next session of the N. E. Conference, it was thought proper to appoint him to that place as his field of labor for the ensuing year. He continued to preach in the Congregational meeting-house, and a Class was formed, consisting of twelve persons, viz., John Hawes, Benj. Dillingham, Ruth Dillingham, Abigail Hawes, Daniel Somerton, Hannah Somerton, Ann Wrightington, Freelove Nye, Mary Cushman, Lydia Cushman, Jonathan Danforth, and Nancy Danforth. The society increased gradually during Mr. Kibby's stay, which was three years; and when he left, at the Conference of 1809, it numbered thirty members.

Mr. Hawes was one of the noblest pillars and fairest ornaments of the infant church; his piety was of the highest grade, and we indulge in no vain panegyric in saying that he adorned his profession by every trait which should characterize the Christian. Although a gentleman of wealth, and high standing in the community, he ever manifested the meek simplicity of a child, in all his intercourse in public or private life. He was for many years collector of the port of New Bedford, which office he held until his death; but whatever relation he sustained, or whatever station he filled, he possessed the confidence of all who knew him. He lived in the fellowship and warm affection of the church, and died a triumphant death, in the faith of Christ; leaving a memory still dear to the circle who survive him. Mr. Kibby was succeeded by Rev. Nehemiah Coye; Mr. Coye was followed, in 1810, by Rev. Levi Walker; Mr. Coye was returned again in 1811, and remained with the society till 1817. When he returned, in 1811, he found the house in which he had formerly preached no longer at his service, the Congregationalists having employed a preacher to occupy it. The church rented, as a temporary place for its meetings, a chamber over a store next east of the bridge, on the south side of the street, which

building is yet standing. The society now felt the need of a suitable meeting-house, and immediate steps were taken to procure one. Mr. Hawes gave them an eligible lot in the centre of the village, and added $100 in money to his donation. A house was soon erected, although it remained partially unfinished till Rev. Benj. R. Hoyt was stationed there, in 1817. Mr. Hoyt was followed, in 1819, by Rev. Shipley W. Wilson, at which time there were two hundred members in society, some of whom resided in the village of New Bedford. We here take leave of the honored parent society at the Head of the River, and notice the progress of Methodism in New Bedford. As early as 1806, there were a few Methodists in that village: of the number, were Mrs. Phebe Stowell and Mrs. Susannah Maxfield. In the same or following year, Mrs. Esther Chapman, from the Head of the River, also resided in New Bedford. Mr. John Wady was also residing there, — all of them members of the Methodist church. While at the Head of the River, Mr. Kibby occasionally visited New Bedford, and preached at the houses of Mrs. Stowell and Mrs. Maxfield, holding a Class-meeting after preaching. Mr. John Wady also occasionally conducted the exercises of a Class-meeting, but it is not known that any Class was formed at that time. It is believed the first Class in New Bedford was formed in 1817. It consisted of sixteen persons; their names were John Hawes,* Mary Hawes, Joseph Stowell, Phebe Stowell, Thurston Chapman, Esther Chapman, Zaccheus Cushman, Almy Perkins, Susannah Maxfield, Benj. Keith, Phineas Kinney, Achsah Kinney, Sarah Adams, Timothy J. Dyre, Mehitable Bennet, James Blur. The original paper is now in possession of Zaccheus Cushman, and bears the following inscription: "New Bedford Class Paper. Zaccheus Cushman, Phineas Kinney, leaders. Benj. Keith, preacher. The Friday before Quarterly Meeting to be observed as a day of fasting and prayer. Keep yourselves in the love of God." It bears date April 4, 1817. Benj. Keith, whose name is on it, was a local preacher, residing for a little while in the village. At that time there was no stationed preacher with the society at the Head of the River,

* At that time residing in New Bedford.

—Mr. Coye, a local preacher being with them. While the brethren generally went to the Head of the River to attend meetings, on the Sabbath and on other occasions, they also held prayer-meetings among themselves, and sometimes had preaching at private houses, either by the preacher in charge or by some one visiting New Bedford. On one occasion, Rev. George Pickering preached at the residence of Mr. Hawes, a large building on the south-west corner of Elm and Water streets. Soon the brethren, for their better accommodation, leased a hall and fitted it up for a place of religious worship. The building is now converted into a dwelling-house, on the south-west corner of Mill and North Second streets. In 1819 the little band received a valuable accession to their strength, by the arrival of Benj. K. Sayer, a local preacher, who at that time removed from Newport, R. I., and established himself in business in New Bedford. Soon after his arrival, as a few of the brethren casually met, one remarked that he "thought they had long enough gone up to Jerusalem to worship," and proposed that thenceforth they should have preaching in the hall on the Sabbath, having Mr. Sayer for their preacher; to which proposition Mr. Sayer partially consented, and from that time preaching was regularly and statedly enjoyed by them in the village, and a new era dawned on the destinies of Methodism in New Bedford; Mr. Sayer continuing to preach for them, without compensation, until a preacher was supplied from Conference.

At the Conference of 1820 New Bedford village was first recognized as a separate station, and the little church soon after resolved to erect a chapel. A lot was purchased on Elm-street, the site of the present Elm-street church, and a house erected, forty-five by fifty feet. The building was thus constructed with a view to its future enlargement, so sanguine were the brethren, at that early day, of the increase and prosperity of Methodism in New Bedford; an anticipation which has been more than realized. The members of the church were few and feeble, but had strong hearts; they had a mind to work in the cause which they had espoused and loved, and contributed to it according to their ability, and some of them beyond their ability. In its very

commencement, the society in New Bedford manifested a noble, though, perhaps, not a peculiar trait, — a determination to rely on their own efforts, with the blessing of God, in their pecuniary matters, with whatever aid their own citizens might afford them; a characteristic which, as a church, they maintain to the present day, though they have detached from their body new societies three times, exclusive of the branch in Dartmouth, and in the city have three places of worship, viz., Elm, Fourth and Pleasant streets.

Their chapel was begun in June, 1821, and preaching was had in it as soon as it was covered; the brethren preparing it on Saturday evenings for that purpose, by spreading boards for seats. A vestry, sufficiently large at the time, was finished in the attic story, which was subsequently the place of many conversions. In that "upper room" Jesus often met his children, and precious and hallowed are the associations which still cluster around that retired sanctuary, so often illuminated with the glory of the invisible God. The vestry continued to be used until 1841, when the house was enlarged, and a beautiful and commodious vestry formed in the basement. Jesse Fillemore, under whose labors these efforts were made, was succeeded, in 1822, by Solomon Sias, who remained two years. During the latter part of Mr. Sias' stay, many professed faith in Christ; and when he left, in 1824, there were one hundred and thirty in the society. He was followed by Epaphras Kibby, and in 1825 Mr. Kibby was followed by Frederick Upham. During those two years there was a decrease of thirty-three, leaving ninety-seven in society. Jacob Sanborn followed Mr. Upham, in 1826, and remained with them two years. They were years of spiritual prosperity: during his ministry the Lord favored them with an outpouring of his Spirit; a gracious revival ensued, and the net increase was thirty-eight, making the whole number in society one hundred and thirty-five. In 1828, Rev. Asa Kent succeeded Mr. Sanborn, and received into the society fifty-two, leaving to his successor, Timothy Merritt, in 1829, one hundred and eighty-seven members. During Mr. Merritt's charge a parsonage was commenced, which was finished early in 1830, at

which period the N. E. Conference held a session in New Bedford for the first time.

For a number of years there had been a Class in Fairhaven, a village on the east bank of the Acushnet river; it was now thought the time had arrived in which it was proper to establish a church in that place. Accordingly, a lot was procured, and a house erected; and when, at a subsequent period, the society in Fairhaven was organized, they took the house, and assumed the debt remaining on it. Mr. Merritt remained till 1831, and was followed by Daniel Webb. For a year or two previous to this period, there had been conversations in the society about procuring a room in the south part of the town, suitable for prayer-meetings and Sabbath-schools. In 1831 the subject was taken up in good earnest, a lot was purchased, and a building committee appointed, who immediately contracted for the erection of the Fourth-street chapel. It was erected in 1831, and was dedicated Feb. 4th, 1832. Asa Kent officiated in the chapel till the next session of the N. E. Conference. In 1832 A. D. Sargent was appointed colleague to Mr. Webb, and they labored this year in connection, the society worshipping in the two houses constituting but one charge. Previous to the Conference of 1833, the society mutually agreed to separate so far as to become two district charges: the Fourth-street society was then for the first time recognized in the Minutes of the N. E. Conference.

During a number of years it had been the practice of brethren of the New Bedford and Fairhaven societies to go out into adjacent villages and hold meetings. At different periods, these meetings were sustained at "Smith's Mills," Padanaram, and Baker-town, small settlements in Dartmouth. In Padanaram several flourishing Classes were formed, and attached to the New Bedford societies; and in 1837, through the instrumentality of James D. Butler, a gracious revival spread through that region, and subsequently a flourishing society was formed, — recognized on the Minutes as South Dartmouth, — and a meeting-house erected. In 1843 the Elm-street society again planted a colony at Pleasant-street. For a year or two previous, such a

step had been contemplated. In the summer of that year, a lot was purchased, and a large vestry built on it. It was opened for worship in August, and has since been superseded by a substantial church. An additional appointment, the Kempton-street mission, has also been established. Thus has Methodism advanced in New Bedford, till it now (1850) reports four appointments, exclusive of the neighboring ones mentioned as connected with its history. The number of Methodists in the city proper is between six and seven hundred.

Mr. Lee visited MARBLEHEAD in 1790, during his first tour among the eastern towns of New England. Here he had cause to believe that his preaching was made a great blessing to the people; "some of them," he remarks, "complain of being almost starved for the word." This was on July 17, 1790.* "He preached the first time," says a subsequent pastor of the church, "in what was then called the Rock church, originally built for the Hopkinsians, afterwards a Baptist church, and now transformed into a dwelling-house, on Watson-street."† In the latter part of the year, Marblehead became one of the regular appointments of his circuit. His preaching excited an extensive interest. Crowds gathered to hear him. "They said they never heard such preaching before, and thought he appeared like one of the old prophets. This was the first impression; but afterwards, though some were seriously affected, many ridiculed and opposed Methodist sentiments and preachers." His biographer says that "In Marblehead, Ipswich, and other places, he with difficulty made out to preach; he could scarcely move a step without being entangled in a knot of committee-men. These guardians of the town laws and privileges constantly watched the movements of other ministers. Mr. Lee scarcely ever found them in a humor to give their unanimous consent for him to preach in the houses over which they had the guardianship; but very frequently, while they were deliberating upon the expediency or

* Lee's History of Methodism. An. 1790.

† MS. History of the M. E. church in Marblehead, by Rev. E. Otheman, prepared in 1839. The subsequent quotations, in this sketch, not otherwise credited, are from this document.

inexpediency of his preaching, some friendly person would open his doors, and Mr. Lee preached to numbers who flocked from every direction to hear the word."

"The Lord, by his Providence," says Mr. Otheman, "had prepared the way for the opening of a dwelling-house for Methodist preaching. Mr. Ebenezer Martin, who had been converted under Mr. Whitefield's preaching, had heard the Methodist ministry in the south, and reported to his neighbors their remarkable zeal and success. He welcomed Lee on his arrival, opened his house for religious services, and consecrated it as a preaching place, and a home for the weary Itinerant. This house is situated on Darling-street, next to the pump. The preaching was held in a large unfinished 'upper room,' which had been used as a billiard-room during the Revolutionary war, at which period the mansion was occupied as a hotel. Seven of the family of Mr. Martin are now members of the church in Marblehead."

Mr. Lee visited Marblehead frequently during his labors in Lynn and its vicinity. His powerful appeals produced a profound impression, and he records, on the 31st of July, 1791, that "there is a considerable stir in this town respecting the sentiments of the Methodists, and a great many wish us to depart out of their coasts." Among those who became savingly interested in his ministrations was a Mrs. Prentice, who induced her husband to open his house, on "New Meeting-house Lane," for Methodist preaching. This house is situated second from the corner of what are now called Bock and Mugford streets. In its upper room, Class and prayer meetings, preaching, and even Quarterly Meetings, were held. Its great distinction, however, is, that within its walls was formed the first Methodist society of Marblehead, which consisted of seven individuals, all females. Their names were Prentice, Doake, Stevens, Beale, Goss, Green, and Barker. None of them are now living, but several of their descendants are members of the church. In what year, or under what preacher, the society was formed, we have not been able to ascertain, but it was doubtless under the auspices of Mr. Lee, and some time in 1791 or 1792. Mrs. Prentice was a widow, by the name of Jayne, when she was married to Mr. Prentice. She

had several children by her former husband, one of whom, Peter Jayne, became a distinguished travelling preacher. While services were held in Mr. Martin's house, Ezekiel Cooper preached there, — probably in the year 1793, when he was Presiding Elder on Boston district. He was then in the vigor of his faculties, and everywhere interested his hearers by the acumen and originality of his mind. He delivered a discourse in Marblehead, on the winding stairs of Solomon's Temple, from 1 Kings 6 : 8. It was an ingenious and profitable allegory, exhibiting the various steps by which the Christian must ascend in his spiritual course.

Mr. James Bowler heard this discourse, — the first he ever heard from a Methodist preacher. Not only its ingenious construction, but its evangelical application, interested him much, and impressed him with a highly favorable opinion of the tireless Itinerants, who were laboring for the conversion of his fellow-townsmen. He soon after befriended the small church, and hired to it an upper apartment in his house, on Lee-street, at the low rent of fifteen dollars per year. It was furnished with seats, and though accessible from without only by a ladder, continued to be the sanctuary of the society till they were able to build a chapel. The great evangelist of the east, Jesse Lee, who never despised the day of small things, climbed its ladder, and joyfully opened it with religious services, on the 30th of April, 1793. "To-night," he says, "we met in it for the first time. The Lord owned our meeting, and his presence was felt among us. I felt great liberty in teaching the people the way to heaven, and felt more encouraged about the place than I used to be." Mr. Bowler suffered no little persecution for his attention to the new sect; but he steadily adhered to them, assisting them with funds, and rescuing them several times, when otherwise they must have sunk under their embarrassments.

A curious circumstance is said to have been the immediate cause of the opening of his house to the Methodist Itinerants. After having heard them several times, and been led to reflect on their peculiar modes of labor, he one night dreamed (doubtless under the influence of such reflections) that an angel stood

at his bedside, and directed him to take his Bible, and read the 13th chapter of Matthew, beginning at the 3d verse. He thought that he attempted immediately to obey the celestial visiter. He possessed two Bibles. He imagined that he opened the smaller one, but found that the leaf containing this verse was gone; and, in attempting to reach the larger copy, he awoke. The next day his curiosity led him to examine his Bibles. The designated verse and chapter were actually torn out of the smaller one! On examining the other, he found the verse to read, "*Behold a sower went forth to sow*," &c. We know not that Mr. Bowler ascribed this singular circumstance to any supernatural agency. It might have resulted from a confusion of previous Scripture reading, and reflections on the Methodist Itinerancy, cleared up and adjusted into a consistent picture by that singular magic of dreams, which has often thus wrought marvels, if not mysteries. In whatever light he considered the curious fact, it at least led his mind into such reflections on the text as resulted in the conviction that the *Itinerant* ministry was the most scriptural mode of promulgating the Gospel, and from that time forward he firmly sustained it.

The society at Marblehead had its share of the trials of Methodism in that day. One of its pastors, Mr. Rexford, was snowballed through the streets; some of the members were stoned and beaten, openly. When one of the little number died, his burial in the grave-yard was opposed, because he had been a Methodist. The preachers were not allowed to hold meetings in the town school-houses, and were at last prohibited from preaching on the common. They were under the necessity here, as elsewhere, of proclaiming their message in the streets. Tour Hill, also the hill north of the railroad depot, and the steps of the town-house, were the scenes of their labors, and witnessed their persecutions and invincible spirit.

In 1800 the society succeeded in the erection of a chapel. They were yet few in number, and poor in resources; only about $100 could be raised in the town towards the new building, and about $150 were sent them from abroad. The project would probably have failed, had not Mr. Bowler, who still kept his

house open as an asylum for the struggling band, generously advanced the necessary funds, and given a site for the building. It was located in the rear of the present parsonage, on the summit of a large rock. Dr. Thomas F. Sargeant dedicated it. Like most of our early chapels, it was not very fastidiously finished, and continued some years neither clapboarded nor seated; rough boards or blocks formed its only pews. It was considerably improved in 1804, but not completed until 1818. In 1833 it was superseded by a new chapel, and converted into a parsonage.

An extensive work of God occurred in the year 1808. In 1810 a remarkable religious interest prevailed among the youth of the town. "It had been," says one who shared in its blessings, "a season of spiritual dearth; the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision; but in the year 1810 the Lord was pleased to manifest himself by his Holy Spirit, in a peculiar manner, in the hearts and consciences of the young. The writer of this was then eleven years old, and an eye-witness, as well as participant, of the scenes he describes. Prayer-meetings were held by the Methodists, at private houses, during the week, besides the ordinary ministrations of the word. You would never be disappointed, in heats or colds, if you desired to attend meeting on Sabbath evening in the old house, which was literally, as well as spiritually, *founded upon a rock*. I remember its first appearance, when there was neither gallery nor pews, but simply plank benches. I remember, also, my impressions there; they were, that it was the house of God — the gate of heaven. A band of faithful watchmen, who blew the Gospel trumpet, had succeeded each other there, and the fruits of their labors were the addition of faithful souls, who, like Enoch, walked with God, and who stood up now to encourage the young converts, many of whom were destined to stand in their places afterwards in the church. And now, amid the busy scenes of life, while one was going to his farm, and another to his merchandise, a lad of thirteen years, a member of a thoughtless, irreligious family, was heard fervently praying, in an attic room. The great change in his spirit and

demeanor surprised his friends, especially his associates and school-mates who soon followed his example, until some forty or fifty, from all parts of the town, were united for prayer and the reading of the Scriptures. The fields, in those days, bore witness to the voice of prayer, and the songs of praise, from these youthful lips and hearts, to the astonishment of the people of the town, who wondered whether the work were of God or of man. The intervals of school-hours, the vacations, and any time the youth could call their own, were spent, by little companies, in prayer and songs of praise. All diversions were laid aside, and the truths of death, judgment, and eternity, were the only topics of conversation. The latter part of 1810, and throughout the whole of 1811, the revival continued, and many believers were added to the Lord. While these youth endeavored to live a life of godliness, and mutually assisted each other in the way to heaven, they met with violent opposition from the wicked. The powers of darkness were at work, and many of the young converts were brought in contact with severe temptations. From these causes, many went back, and walked no more with Jesus. But, no doubt, the sun of righteousness had risen upon them, for subsequent events have rekindled the flame of Divine grace in their souls. Ministers from neighboring towns visited their meetings, and conversed with the youth, and were astonished at what they saw and heard. It was a means by which the Redeemer was honored in the conversion of adults in all parts of the town; the word had free course, and was glorified. Of forty persons now recollected, who were active in those interesting scenes, twenty are now living, and of these, thirteen are now members of churches in this place, — the larger part of them in the Methodist church."

In 1833, the society, after having been for several years connected with Salem, was again formed into an independent station, under the care of its former pastor, Epaphras Kibby. This was a jubilee year to the church. Its new chapel was finished, and dedicated by David Kilburn. Mr. Kibby was the first stationed pastor who had preached in the old chapel, and the last that now occupied its pulpit. During his present appointment,

there was the greatest revival of religion ever known in the town, though the additions to the Methodist society were not so large as they had been in some previous years. Forty-nine were admitted on trial, among whom were twenty or thirty heads of families; and on this account the accession was greatly invigorating to the church. "Mr. Kibby," says our authority, "found outward circumstances somewhat different from what they were when he was first stationed there. Then the unfriendliness of other denominations, and the hostility of the world, drove our own people together, and served to secure the fruits of his labor to his own society; but now, another course was taken." In brief, proselytism from the Methodist church was pursued on the amplest scale, and compelled Mr. K. to rebuke the evil publicly. The other churches of the town received no inconsiderable additions — the result of the labors of their Methodist brethren. After long indifference, if not hostility, towards the latter, "they seemed, at last, to have found out that Methodist converts made very good church-members. Accordingly, feeling now very friendly to our operations, and cordially assisting to forward the good work of revival, they were quite sure, some how or other, to lead away a great many who were converted or awakened at our meetings." The Methodist church became familiarly designated as the "nursery," where, as one said at the time, "all the other churches got their plants." Mr. Kibby's rebukes, however, had good effect; the revival advanced prosperously, and at the end of the year he returned the number of one hundred and ninety-three members.

Frequent, though not so extensive revivals, have occurred since. "The Rev. Mr. Pickering remarked, in a letter to me," says Mr. Otheman, "that if all had joined our society who are the fruits of Methodist efforts, it would be the largest in town. We cannot say, however, that we regret so many having joined other communions; we doubt not they will do good where they are. We are not raised up, nor is it our object to build up a new party; whatever else has been objected against us, we have been preserved from the charge of proselytism. If souls are converted among us, and see fit to join other communions, we cannot but

hope they will be the means of eventually removing prejudices that may exist among their brethren against us, and will disseminate the principles and experience which they have learned among us. God may have a deeper design in this matter than we are aware of."

Three preachers have originated in the Marblehead society, Rev. Messrs. Peter Jayne, Ebenezer Ireson, and Joseph Ireson. The first two have entered into their rest, but have left a trail of purest light behind them. Marblehead has witnessed the ministrations of a host of our veterans, — Asbury, Coke, Whatcoat, Lee, Daniel Smith, Lemuel Smith, Bloodgood, Cooper, Spry, Pickering, Kibby, and many others, whose names are like ointment poured forth.

CHAPTER XL.

ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR 1809–10.

New York Conference. — Asbury in New England. — At Norwalk. — Hartford. — Newport. — Bristol. — Boston. — Waltham. — Lynn. — Incident. — New England Conference. — Characteristic Notes. — Finances. — Proceedings. — Asbury Itinerating.

The New York Conference commenced its session in the city of New York, on the 10th of May, 1809. It was attended by "about one hundred and twenty members," says Asbury. Many of the "mighty men," of the times were there, — Crawford, Thatcher, Washburn, Hibbard, Hunt, Clark, Garrettson, Anson, Draper, Ostrander, Bangs, Moriarty, Coleman, Crowell, Vannest, Finnegan, Robertson, Woolsey, &c. The session continued until the fifteenth. "We had great peace and good order," writes Asbury; "we had an ordination of Elders at John-street church, on the Sabbath day. We had a great deal of faithful preaching. As I wish not to relate the trials met with, I will let everything but what is printed rest in shades: there were some critical cases, but nothing appeared against any member to justify expulsion. There were one hundred and fifteen preachers stationed; and there were few complaints. If I have slumbered five hours per night, it is as much as I have done in the matter of sleep."

Ten young men were received on trial, nine remained on trial, twelve were admitted to membership; four located, three were on the supernumerary and two on the superannuated lists.

After the adjournment, Asbury hastened with Henry Boehm, who was now his travelling companion, to his retreat at the "Sherwoods'." "I retired," he says, "to sacred solitude, and great and delightful communion with God; but want of sleep comes upon me like an armed man. Hail, holy day! On the

Sabbath I preached at Sherwood's chapel; afterward at New Rochelle chapel: we had an open season in both congregations. The Quakers are offended because their errors in sentiment and practice are spoken against. I fear what is properly *the reproach of Christ* has long been wiped away from this *respectable people.* O Lord, save thy now despised Methodist children from the praises of the people of the world!"

On Monday, he was at Norwalk, Ct., where he preached, and stirred up the young church to build a chapel. They were "poor," it was alleged. "Poor may they ever be," was his reply. "On Tuesday," he writes, "I came to Peck's, at Stratford, — a faithful friend, and thence on to Father Jocelin's, New Haven, weary, and sleepy, and glad to rest. I dined with W. Griffin in Guildford: here is a lot to build a house of worship on, and God will work here. In the afternoon I preached at Jeremiah Miner's, in Killingworth; thence, crossing the Connecticut river, came into New London. I have had great temptations, and great consolations. The weather has been extremely warm. My horse twice attempted to run away with my chair, so I was obliged to quit it. I must needs preach in New London; I gave them a discourse on 1 John 2: 6. The house was soon filled, and many went away who could not get in: surely the society, and preachers too, have been blind to their own interests, or they would have occupied every foot of ground; but we have never taken advantage of circumstances as they offered in this place, and have lost by our negligence. We crossed Narraganset Bay on Friday, and came into Newport. Grand house — steeple, pews — by lottery: the end is to sanctify the means. — Ah! what pliability to evil!" "I spoke," he adds, "with difficulty, and with little order in my discourses. From New York thus far we have had dust and rough roads, and I have been much tried and greatly blessed. We have rode two hundred miles in six days."

The next day he visited Capt. Beale, at Fort Wolcott. The captain, as we have seen, was a good Methodist, and one of the chief founders of the society in Newport. Asbury preached to his garrison, "baptized some children, visited the school, prayed with the

sick in the hospital, exhorted the poor sinners to turn to God; but ah! I might have said and done more. Here I saw discipline, order, correctness; it was grand and pleasing. What changes I pass through! How hardly shall they who travel much keep a constant eye on duty, the cross, holiness, and God!"

He passed on, rejoicing at many indications of prosperity, but lamenting also, with perhaps unfounded apprehension, over what he deemed evidences of declension. "On Tuesday, 30th," he writes, "we came to the pleasant town of Bristol. The Methodists here have a house with pews, and a preacher who has not half enough to do: poor work! I gave them a discourse on 1 Cor. 15: 58. I have as much as I can bear in body and mind. I see what has been doing for nine years past to make Presbyterian Methodists. At Warren I lodged with Samuel Childs; his wife is a Shunamite. We had freedom in our meeting here: I preached on Heb. 2: 3. Thursday, June 1st, I had a feeling season at Somerset chapel, whilst speaking from 1 Peter 4: 2. Brother Brayton's was my home. Levi Walker has not labored in vain; but it seemed as if there had been three preachers to do one man's work. There are here two hundred and ninety-one members. We reached Easton, and I was indeed tired."

On Saturday he reached Boston, and the next day, though too feeble to stand in the pulpit, he preached twice. "I preached," he says, "in the old chapel on Sabbath morning, and administered the Sacrament. In the afternoon I gave them a discourse in the new chapel; it was an open time, of much feeling, and deep attention was paid to the speaker. Had I not spoken sitting, pain and weariness would have prevented my finishing. May the Lord water his own word! I hear of a considerable revival in several places, and that the Lord is bringing out some children to do the work of men: 'out of the mouths of babes,'— so let it be!"

On Monday he reached the mansion of Bemis, at Waltham, "dripping wet." "I found," he writes, "the four generations in health, and I got (O, how sweet!) a comfortable night's sleep,— the first I have had for many nights. How good is rest to soul

and body, after hard labor for the good of the souls and bodies of our fellow-men!"

On Tuesday he preached to a "family congregation," under the roof of his host, and left for Lynn. "In the evening I preached. Our hard-going horses brought us through the dust to Marblehead on Thursday. I held forth on John 8: 31, 32. We rode onwards, through a goodly prospect of fine buildings and fine meeting-houses. At Beverly mine host did not quite understand praying in the day-time. At Joseph Weak's, in the evening, at Greenland. From this unpromising place, and other surrounding towns, God has raised up a society. On Saturday I found a happy, simple-hearted society, at Brother Gardiner's. The labors of George Pickering and Brother Stevens have raised up, under God, a promising society here."

On his route to the eastward, he was overtaken by the New Hampshire and Vermont preachers, who were on their way to the Conference. One of them says: "The next morning I started, in company with several other preachers, for Conference, which sat in Monmouth, Me. After a few hours' ride, we halted in a grove, and let our horses feed in the highway, while we held a prayer-meeting. It was a blessed season. We then passed on, meeting with great kindness, as though the Lord had given the people a command to entertain us for his sake. On the morning before we reached Monmouth, we fell in with Bishop Asbury, and brought up the rear of more than a score of Itinerant Methodist preachers. About ten o'clock we stopped at a tavern, and called for a room. After we had rested about half an hour, Asbury said, 'We must have prayers before we leave; I will go and give notice to the landlord, and some of you must pray.' I followed him to the bar-room, to learn his skill and manner. He said, 'Landlord, we are going to have prayers in our room; and if you, or any of your family, wish to attend, we should be happy to have you.' — 'Thank you, sir,' he replied; 'please wait until I speak, not only to my family, but my neighbors.' Soon they flocked in; we sung and prayed, and melting mercy moved our hearts. When our bill was called for, we were told there was no demand against us, and were requested

to call again. How blessed to hold up the light of truth in all places, as we pass along through the world!"* It was Asbury's invariable custom to pray in the family where he stopped, whether at public or private houses.

By Thursday, the 15th of June, they had reached Monmouth, Me., where, on that day, Asbury opened the New England Conference. McKendree was present, but we have no notice of the share he took in the proceedings. "We have," says Asbury, "eighty-two men, forty of whom compose the Conference." Among the members present were Hedding, Soule, Pickering, Brodhead, Wells, Sabin, Ruter, Bates, Branch, Sias, Steele, Merrill, Hillman, Munger, and Beale.

The examination of "candidates for membership and Deacon's orders" began the first morning. The case of one was postponed, because he was "unsatisfied on the subject of infant baptism," though his "abilities were good, and his character fair." Another was delayed for "*re-baptizing*." "Much desultory conversation ensued on the subject," notes the secretary; "many remarks were made, and it was voted that we will endeavor to be more uniform in discouraging it." Charles Virgin is pronounced "a good disciplinarian, and acceptable." Ebenezer F. Newell, who had not yet been received on trial, but had travelled under the direction of the Presiding Elder, is recorded to have been "very faithful and very useful; and it was voted to admit him to Deacon's orders, as an exempt case." John Lindsay was "recommended from Sandown circuit, — single — twenty-two years old — very acceptable." One is pronounced "not the most refined, but of good abilities;" another, being "thirty-two years old, and married, was not admitted." One being "twenty-six years of age, of singular abilities, but eccentric, and not approved by the people, was rejected." Benjamin Bishop, who had located, was reädmitted. "He had made improvement since he ceased travelling, — was very faithful, and in many instances successful." Amasa Taylor was recommended from Ashburnham circuit; he "was single — twenty-two years old, — was modest — improving." Benjamin R. Hoyt, recommended from Needham circuit, "was twenty years old —

* Ebenezer F. Newell.

single, — very highly recommended." George Gary "was under sixteen years of age, but had good abilities, and was well received." Edward Hyde "was well approved." These names are still familiar to the church, and the brief characteristic intimations attached to them more than forty years ago are not without interest to us at this date.

The financial circumstances of the Conference were still full of embarrassment. The dividend from the Book Concern amounted to $300, and $170 were received from the Chartered Fund; but so slight an offset to their deficit were these sums, and so disposed were these self-sacrificing men to share their reliefs as well as their sufferings, that they formally resolved "to give an account of what they had received as private presents," that such donations might be taken into the general amount, and be thus virtually shared among all the brethren.

On Monday, June 19th, the session closed. Committees (of which there were yet but two or three) reported, and the devoted band of Itinerants, about again to scatter to all parts of their widely-extended field, "spent an hour and a half in relating their former experiences and present exercises." Martin Ruter, by request of the bishops, read the appointments, and, by night, many of them were on their way to the conflicts and trials of another year.

On Sunday, during the session, Asbury preached to a vast throng — estimated at three thousand — from Isaiah's exultant words: "Sing, oh ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it, &c., for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Isa. 44: 23. "It was," he says, "an open season." At the adjournment, he remarks, "I have to lament my want of information respecting both the preachers and the circuits. We have ordained twenty-one Deacons, and seven Elders. We have located eleven elders, reädmitted one, and added seventeen preachers upon trial. There is a small increase here, and there are fair prospects for the future. I am kept in peace."

The candidates received on trial, at this session, were, Robert Arnold, Benjamin Jones, Stephen Bailey, John Lindsay, Wm. Frost, Isaiah Emerson, Robert Hays, Squire Streeter, Daniel Wentworth, Benjamin Bishop (reädmitted), Elisha Streeter,

Amasa Taylor, Benj. R. Hoyt, Nathan Hill, Henry Hawkins, Benj. Merritt, George Gary and Edward Hyde.

The day following the adjournment, Asbury departed westward. On Saturday, 24th, he reached Danville, Vt., and though quite exhausted with fatigue and feebleness, he preached on the morrow in the court-house. He had to sit during the discourse. "From New York to Danville," he writes, "we compute our ride to have been seven hundred miles. We passed many a fertile hill, and saw many fruitful vales, through which flowed noble rivers."

On Tuesday, he again preached, but at the village chapel this time. Two of his Itinerant brethren were with him. Being too feeble to go into the pulpit, he took his position in a pew near it, and thence addressed the assembly from Heb. 3: 12—14. His congregations were large; and the court, which was in session, invited him to preach before it; but "I had no strength and no time for this," he remarks. He was on his route the same day. On Friday, 30th, he was on the shore of Lake Champlain. "I preached," he writes, "at Fuller's, from Titus 3: 9, 8. Here I ordained Joseph Sampson, a native of Canada, and sent him a missionary to his countrymen." He adds, prophetically, "The day of small things will be great: but the day is not yet come — rather, it is still afar off; patience, my soul! Do I not feel for the lost sheep? — yea, verily!"

He passed into New York, and thence westward and southward to Tennessee and South Carolina, traversing the forests, preaching in barns, sleeping on the floors of log-cabins. "Such roads, such rains, and such lodgings!" he exclaims. "Why should I wish to stay in this land? I have no possessions or babes to bind me to the soil; what are called the comforts of life I rarely enjoy. The wish to live an hour such a life as this would be strange to so suffering, so toil-worn a wretch. But God is with me, and souls are my reward. I may yet rejoice; yea, and will rejoice! I might fill pages with this last week's wonders."

Much to be lamented is it that he did not do so. Few records of adventure could be more romantic, and none more illustrative of missionary devotion and heroism.

CHAPTER XLI.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

Appointments. — Coles Carpenter. — His Death. — Benjamin R. Hoyt. — Early Experience. — Mrs. Pickering. — Persecutions. — Revivals in Vermont. — Battle of Lake Champlain. — New Bedford. — Capt. John Hawes. — Boston. — Wilbur Fisk. — Colporteurage. — Character. — John Lindsay. — Early Life. — Labors. — Character. — Death. — George Gary. — Christian Experience. — Services.

THE New England Conference made the following appointments, for the year 1809–10:

BOSTON DISTRICT. Geo. Pickering, *Presiding Elder*. *Lynn*, William Stevens; *Marblehead*, William Hunt; *Salisbury, Poplin, and Salem*, Asa Kent, Edward Hyde, Daniel Wentworth; *Harwich*, Joseph A. Merrill; *Falmouth*, Erastus Otis; *Sandwich and Scituate*, Joseph Snelling, Benjamin F. Lambord; *New Bedford*, Nehemiah Coye; *Nantucket*, Jordan Rexford; *Newport*, Daniel Webb; *Bristol and Warren*, Samuel Merwin; *Somerset*, Levi Walker; *Easton and Norton*, John Tinkham; *Boston*, Elijah R. Sabin, Philip Munger; *Portsmouth*, John Brodhead, Alfred Metcalf, Isaac Scarrett.

NEW LONDON DISTRICT. Elijah Hedding, *Presiding Elder*. *Tolland*, Benjamin P. Hill, William Hinman; *Ashburnham*, David Carr, Robert Arnold; *Needham*, Benjamin R. Hoyt, Nathan Hill; *Providence and Smithfield*, Greenleaf R. Norris, Pliny Brett; *East Greenwich*, Theophilus Smith; *Pomfret*, Isaac Bonney, Samuel Cutler; *New London*, Elisha Streeter, John Lindsay.

VERMONT DISTRICT. Thomas Branch, *Presiding Elder*. *Athens*, Solomon Sias; *Wethersfield*, Samuel Thompson, Stephen Bailey; *Barnard*, Eleazar Wells; *Vershire*, Joel Steel; *Barre*, Warren Banister, George Gary; *Danville*, Nathaniel W. Stearns; *Stanstead*, Squire Streeter.

NEW HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT. Martin Ruter, *Presiding Elder. Grantham*, Thomas Asbury, Paul Dustin; *Canaan*, Ebenezer Blake; *Bridgewater*, Leonard Frost; *Pembroke*, Lewis Bates; *Tuftonboro'*, Benjamin Bishop, Amasa Taylor; *Rochester*, Hezekiah Field; *Centre Harbor*, Abner Clark; *Landaff*, Joseph Peck; *Lunenburg*, Benjamin Merrill.

PORTLAND DISTRICT. Joshua Soule, *Presiding Elder. Durham*, J. H. Hardy, J. Spalding, R. Hays; *Scarboro'*, Enoch Jaques; *Falmouth*, Joel Winch; *Conway*, Philip Ayer; *Bethel*, Joshua Randle; *Livermore*, Charles Virgin; *Poland*, Samuel Hillman; *Portland*, Epaphras Kibby.

KENNEBEC DISTRICT. Oliver Beale, *Presiding Elder. Readfield*, David Kilburn; *Norridgewock*, Jonathan Chaney; *Hallowell*, Ebenezer F. Newell; *Vassalboro'*, John Wilkinson; *Union*, John Williamson, Benjamin Jones; *Boothbay*, Caleb Fogg; *Georgetown*, Henry Hawkins; *Industry*, Isaiah Emerson; *Orrington*, Joseph Baker; *Hampden*, Zachariah Gibson; *Bristol*, William Frost; *Penobscot*, David Stimson.

The New England appointments of the New York Conference were:

ASHGROVE DISTRICT. William Anson, *Presiding Elder. Cambridge*, M. B. Bull, William Swayze, S. Sornborger; *Brandon*, Francis Brown; *Charlotte*, Andrew McKain, Marvin Richardson; *Fletcher*, Daniel Brumley, Oliver Sikes; *Dunham*, Landsford Whiting; *Grand Isle*, John Robertson.

RHINEBECK DISTRICT. Aaron Hunt, *Presiding Elder. Pittsfield*, Elijah Woolsey, Phineas Cook; *Whittingham*, Samuel Cockrane; *Buckland*, Lewis Pease; *Granville*, Gershom Pearce, Robert Hibbard; *Litchfield*, Laban Clark, Reuben Harris; *Pownal*, James M. Smith. On the New York district, under the care of Joseph Crawford, were, *Redding*, B. Hibbard and Isaac Candee; *Middletown*, N. W. Thomas, C. Carpenter.

There were in New England, the present year, according to this list, *eight* districts and part of another, *seventy-one* circuits, and *one hundred and seven* preachers. There had been an increase of *three* circuits and *four* preachers.

Among the appointments for the year is the name of COLES

Carpenter, which is endeared to a large section of the church, by long and faithful services. But, notwithstanding his extensive travels, and a quarter of a century spent in ministerial labors, scarcely any facts of his history have been recorded, except in that higher registry which is kept in heaven, and to which the self-sacrificing men, whose lives we have endeavored humbly to commemorate, looked as their only record. Mr. Carpenter was born in Westchester County, N. Y., on the 17th of March, 1784, and received on probation at the New York Conference of the present year. His first appointment was in New England, — on the Middletown circuit, Ct. He subsequently occupied important stations and circuits in New England and New York till 1833, when he took charge of the Troy district. He exhibited immediately superior capacity for his new position, and "his labors were highly appreciated by his ministerial brethren;" * but death suddenly summoned him to a higher sphere. He died of bilious colic, at Cambridge, N. Y., on the 17th of February, 1834. His end was with "the victory" which is "through our Lord Jesus Christ." He declared, in the agonies of dissolution, that his faith in the vital and consolatory doctrines he had preached was unshaken; the terrors of death were gone; his soul was sustained in a blessed composure, and his dying accents, uttered as his voice was failing, were, "Glory! glory! glory!" His "works do follow" him, and his memory is precious in many hearts that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Benjamin R. Hoyt still lingers, a venerable counsellor in the gates of our Zion. He was born in New Braintree, Worcester County, Mass., on the 6th of January, 1789. When about nine years old, his parents removed with him to Craftsbury, Vt., where he resided till his seventeenth year. There, in his fifteenth year, he was converted to God, through the instrumentality of Phineas Peck, "of precious memory," he writes. Under Mr. Peck's labors, a revival of religion prevailed at this time in the neighborhood, which resulted in the organization of a Class in the adjacent town of Greensboro', of which Mr. Hoyt became

* Minutes, 1834.

a member, as there was not yet a Methodist society in Craftsbury. "At that time, the Danville circuit," he says, "extended over a tract of country which reached from Canada to Peacham, and included more than twenty towns. Throughout this extensive field young Peck travelled and preached with great success, and the foundation was laid for a permanent circuit, which has grown and flourished, until no less than fifteen charges or stations have been formed out of it. Indeed, the greater part of what is now called the Danville district was then included in the Danville circuit." *

In the spring of 1807 he became a resident of Winchester, N. H.; and here, under the counsels of Asa Kent and other circuit preachers, an impression that he was called of God to preach the word, but which he long resisted, was much deepened; his personal piety became more fervent; he was appointed a Class Leader and an Exhorter, and in March of the following year Thomas Branch signed his license as a Local Preacher. On the first of August ensuing, he commenced Itinerating on Ashburnham circuit, under the direction of Elijah R. Sabin, the Presiding Elder of the district. He was subsequently transferred to the Needham circuit, of venerable memory. "While at Winchester," he writes, "and on the Ashburnham circuit, a number of souls were thought to have been converted through my feeble instrumentality, which encouraged me much to persevere, under my infirmities, diffidence, and proneness to discouragement. I was much indebted to the kind sympathy of Christian friends at Winchester; and on the circuit there were many who manifested an interest in my prosperity. Among the preachers were Asa Kent, E. R. Sabin, G. R. Norris. Among the membership on Needham circuit, I was under obligations to none more than to Mrs. Pickering, wife of Rev. George Pickering. She was in an eminent degree the safe counsellor of young men just beginning the work of the ministry. I have reason to thank God that I was favored with her Christian regards at the time when I so much needed them."

He was received, the present year, as a probationer, at the New

* Letter to the author, from which we derive our further facts respecting Mr. Hoyt.

England Conference, and returned to Needham circuit, with Nathan Hill and Elijah Willard (then a local preacher) as his colleagues. "During this year," he says, "we had some revival in several parts of the circuit, and about fifty were admitted to the society. Among the number was our benevolent and useful friend and brother, Lee Claflin. We had, besides our seasons of prosperity, some opposition. At one time, while attending meeting at a friend's house in Hopkinton, two or three pretended young gentlemen very much disturbed us by kneeling down in mockery. While preaching, frequently chips and pieces of apples were flung about the congregation. At another time, while holding a Class at Mr. Stratton's, in Sherburne, several young and some middle-aged men came in and took their seats in a back part of the room. When I finished speaking to the members, I began to address them one by one, in as calm a manner as possible. The first, in reply, said he did not know who the Lord was, — he had never seen him; the second, that he was not happy, but should be when he got home, as he had a good spare-rib roasting; the third, that the Bible was like a fiddle, on which we could play any tune we might please. Thus they went on, till six or eight had been spoken to, when, having been reproved by another preacher present, they went away in a rage. Once, when I was preaching at Phineas Sawyer's dwelling, in Marlboro', a gun was fired off close by the window of the room where I was standing, which frightened the people very much; however, we had a good meeting, and soon after organized a Class of seven members, which was the beginning of Methodism in that old town. In several other places we had more or less disturbance, but nothing compared to that experienced by Elijah R. Sabin and Thomas Asbury, when horns and trumpets were blown in the time of service; when they were waylaid, &c. We were able to proceed through the year, and to preach in more than twenty different towns then embraced in the Needham circuit, extending from Dedham to Lunenburg, and from Westford to Milford."

In 1810 he was appointed to Danville circuit, on which he had joined the church and received license as a local preacher.

A short time before the Conference, being on a visit to Craftsbury, Vt., one of his former neighbors — a professed Deist — called on him, and requested him to preach in the court-house. He consented, and had the privilege of preaching two very powerful sermons, to Congregationalists, Baptists and Universalists, — a large congregation. Much interest was excited. The next Sabbath he preached in Hardwick, to a great number. During the services of that day, a powerful revival commenced; thirty or more persons were struck under conviction before the afternoon sermon was closed; and at a Class-meeting held on the same day, more than that number tarried, and communicated their determination to serve the Lord. "From that time till the Conference, we had," he writes, "as much as we could do. A number were baptized, a Class formed; and it was the general impression that I ought to remain. Under these circumstances, I was appointed as above stated. David Kilburn was my fellow-laborer on the circuit, and a good and faithful one he was. The work spread through Walden and Cabot, into the adjoining towns on that side of the circuit, and, on the other side, through Lyndon, Sutton (Billymead at that time), Curby, and Concord, so that we formed several Classes, and received more than one hundred and fifty into society. In attending to all the interests of this great circuit, we found work for every day of the week, Saturdays excepted, in preaching; meeting Classes, once, twice, and sometimes even three times, in a single day; visiting the sick both in body and mind, and the membership generally. When we left for the Conference, we felt that the blessing of God had been upon the people, and on our feeble labors."

At the next Conference he was ordained a Deacon, by Asbury, and sent to Wethersfield circuit, Vt. In 1812 he was appointed to Barnard circuit, and in 1813 and 1814, Vershire, Vt. During the latter year, he attended the camp-meeting at Williamstown, mentioned in our sketch of Mr. Kilburn, which continued over the Sabbath on which the memorable battle of Lake Champlain was fought. "About the time," he writes, "it was expected the encounter would commence, Mr. Wells, the Presiding Elder,

began the public exercises at the stand, and supplicated the throne of grace in a prayer of great faith and fervor. He prayed the God of battles that victory might crown the efforts and arms of the American forces. He wrestled with much might, Jacob-like; and before he finished, he seemed to prevail, like Israel. The next day news came of the American success. While the battle was in progress, we could hear a distant, low, murmuring sound, and feel the trembling of the ground, caused by the cannonade."

In 1815 his appointment was at Bristol, R. I.; in 1816, Harwich, Mass.; and 1817 and 1818, New Bedford. Of the latter place he says: "It was through the influence and liberality of John Hawes, Esq., that they were enabled to erect a house of worship, and that the preachers were supported, from year to year. I found him and his family my constant friends, throughout my connection with that station. Fifty dollars a year was his cash contribution to the support of the preacher, besides many and repeated acts of kindness and attention, and private gifts. His influence was good in favor of experimental piety. With that of many others, his memory is exceedingly precious. During the year 1819 we rented a hall in New Bedford proper for worship, and there formed a Class of sixteen members. Here we held our third service on the Sabbath. It will be recollected that the original church was not in New Bedford, but Fairhaven, at the Head of the River. New Bedford, however, gave name to the station. This was the first step towards the rearing of so many flourishing churches and congregations in that city. Mr. Hawes defrayed the expense of hiring the hall, which proved to be the birthplace of souls. We formed a Class at Fairhaven, consisting of seven persons, and at the next Conference we were able to report eighty members in society,—an increase of thirty-eight in two years. Not a great number, but, as it afterwards turned out, substantial persons were among them."

In 1819 and 1820 he was stationed in Boston. He gives us the following illustrations of the labors of the metropolitan appointments of that day: "With regard to Quarterly Meetings, Boston was by itself; but with reference to ministerial interchange,

Charlestown was connected with it on the Minutes. Wilbur Fisk was stationed at Charlestown this year. In Boston and Charlestown we had a membership of 494. For places of worship we had Bromfield-street church, the old North church, in Methodist Alley, and a seated room, in which Samuel Snowden preached to the people of color. Beside this, a school-house was rented for religious meetings, at Craigie's Point, East Cambridge. To supply all these places, we formed them into a circuit, and to the stationed preachers added a local preacher, by the name of William Granville. Our plan was something as follows: I, for instance, would preach on a Sabbath morning at Bromfield-street church; meet a Class at noon, in the altar; preach in the old North in the afternoon, and at Charlestown in the evening. Thus, by changing our course for the two succeeding Sabbaths, the preachers were regularly presented to all the different congregations. We had, as will be perceived, plenty of work to do. Beside our studies, on week days, we had much pastoral labor to perform, two and three Classes per week to meet, two public prayer-meetings also to attend, &c. &c. For many Sabbaths I pursued the following plan of services: In the morning, sun-rise, Class at the old North church; a Sunday-school at 9, A. M., in Bromfield-street church; preach there in the forenoon; meet a Class at the close of the sermon; take refreshment; meet the Sunday-school at the old North; preach there in the afternoon; hold a prayer-meeting, or preach, in the evening, and frequently attend a funeral, or marry one or more couple, during the day, which might seem to many a severe day's work. While in Boston, I shared many special favors, — found many kind-hearted friends in the church and congregation. There was a spirit of holiness among the membership existing to a greater degree than I have ever known elsewhere."

In 1821 and 1822 he took charge of Lyndon circuit, Vt. "Judge Fisk's residence," he says, "was at Lyndon. Rev. Wilbur Fisk, his son, having received a superannuated relation, came home, and spent most of his time at Lyndon and vicinity, during this and the succeeding year, visiting occasionally the neighboring circuits. As his health slowly returned, he assisted

on the Sabbaths, and the services rendered by him were highly acceptable, for Mr. Fisk was not without honor in his own town and county. Lyndon had become at this time quite Methodized, through the instrumentality of the preachers who preceded me. Especially, however, was the prosperity I found on my arrival at L. to be attributed to the labors and influence of Rev. Phineas Peck, who had been located there for several years. Through his agency the largest church in town had been gathered. When I came, I found the influence of the town in favor of Methodism."

The ensuing four years he superintended the New Hampshire district, and during this period there was a gain on the district of 889 members and nine chapels, besides two or three others which were projected, but not completed.

In 1827 and 1828 he was appointed to Dover, N. H.; in 1829, Great Falls, N. H., where, during a protracted revival, 228 persons were received into the Classes. In 1830 he was made Presiding Elder of Vermont district, and agent of the Wesleyan University. He travelled this district, at the rate of 3000 miles a year, for four years. Methodist preachers still observed the rules of Wesley respecting the distribution of good books, and were effective colporteurs. "During these years," says Mr. Hoyt, "I sold to the preachers over five thousand dollars' worth of our books, mostly at wholesale prices. At one time, I went to New York and packed up about twelve hundred dollars' worth of them. I received the money for these, and forwarded the same to the agents at New York; and if my recollection is correct, I never lost a shilling by all my transactions in the business of book-selling. There were many revivals on the district, and some years the increase was over five hundred! though this does not so appear on the Minutes, owing to the changes made of circuits from one district to another."

In 1834 and 1835 he was sent to Bradford circuit, Vt.; 1836, Plymouth district, N. H., where he travelled during four years; at the end of his term, he reported a gain of 1400 members. He was placed in charge of the Danville district in 1840, where he remained four years. In 1844 he was transferred to the

Claremont district, and superintended it three years. In 1847 he was sent to Haverhill; 1848, East Salisbury, Mass.; 1849 and 1850, Greenland.

Mr. Hoyt, though advanced in life, still continues in the effective ranks of the ministry. He has done good service to the church, and has ever been a steadfast supporter of all its interests. In periods of trial and public agitation, occasioned by Masonry, Slavery, Millerism and similar causes, he has occupied posts of great responsibility, and sustained them with admirable prudence and success. During the first four years of his ministry, his receipts did not average $50 per year. The last twenty years they have not averaged over $300 per year; and not so much the previous years of his Itinerancy. He has been stationed seven years in Massachusetts, seventeen in Vermont, sixteen in New Hampshire, one in Rhode Island, besides three months on the Ashburnham and six months on the Needham circuits, under the direction of the Presiding Elder; making, in all, nearly forty-two years.

Mr. Hoyt has always been an acceptable and useful preacher. Amidst his early Itinerant labors, he found time to acquaint himself with the original languages of the Scriptures, and he has not fallen behind the progressive intelligence of his times. He has been thrice a delegate to the General Conference, and many years a Presiding Elder. His head is now hoary, but he retains much of his early vigor; his frame is robust, and his features, alike with his conversation, expressive of benevolence and cheerfulness. He is beloved in all the extensive sphere of his acquaintance, for his Christian excellences, the cordiality of his manners, a quiet humor and warm affections.

John Lindsay is another fragrant name of these early times. He was born in Lynn, July 18th, 1788, and was converted to God in his nineteenth year, under the labors of Daniel Webb. Early in his religious history he gave evidence of good talents and future usefulness. He labored successfully as a local preacher in Lynn and its vicinity, and in 1808 his Presiding Elder called him out into the Itinerant field. The New England Conference of the present year received him as one of its

most hopeful candidates, and appointed him to New London circuit. His friend and fellow-laborer, the late and beloved Thomas C. Pierce, furnished us, not long before his death, with the following account of Mr. Lindsay's early labors: "The Minutes show that his first appointments were Somerset, Portsmouth, Portland, Falmouth and Nantucket. In those days these were some of our very best appointments, — they were *stations*, not circuits, — and for a young man to fill them shows that even in his earliest days in the ministry he was highly estimated by his brethren. I can say that he filled all of these appointments successfully, and, as far as I can remember, his reputation as a minister was *very good*. After this, his love of the Itinerancy led him to solicit a circuit. Accordingly, he was appointed to that of Needham; there he remained one year. The following year he was appointed Presiding Elder of Vermont district, where a wider field of usefulness was opened before him. A revival commenced in a female prayer-meeting in Barre, and soon the whole district was in a blaze. He was universally beloved by his preachers, — I knew of no exception. I can remember conversations with him when the sacrifices of an Itinerant were pressing hard upon him; for oh! he fondly loved his home, and no man could be happier in the domestic circle than he."

He sustained, with decided ability, during his first nine years in the ministry, appointments in every one of the New England States. After thus laboring in the most important charges of his Conference, he acted as agent of the Wesleyan University two years, 1835–6. In 1837 he was transferred to the New York Conference, and stationed successively on New Haven district, and at Forsythe-street and Second-street, in the city of New York. In 1842 he was agent for the American Bible Society, and in 1843–4 he was stationed at Poughkeepsie. In 1845 he was transferred to the Troy Conference, and stationed at the Garrettson church, in the city of Albany. In 1846 he was appointed to the Albany district, where he closed his life and labors near the end of his fourth year. He died at his residence in Schenectady, on Wednesday, February 20, lamented by all good men who knew him.

His remains have been interred in Lynn, where several of his early fellow-Itinerants sleep around him. One from whom we have already quoted, but who now rests there with him, thus wrote of his character: "He was all his life a man of great power with God in prayer. Once at my house, during family prayers, my wife, who sat holding an infant upon her lap, afterwards remarked to me that Mr. Lindsay's countenance shone while he was praying. In early life he became the intimate and well-beloved friend of Dr. Fisk, and he sympathized deeply with him in the wants of the church. For the cause of education he willingly made great sacrifices, travelling at his own expense, and laboring in *any* way that he might promote the great work of education among the ministry. He was eminently, all his life, a man of great liberality of mind. I never knew him guilty of a selfish action. He did not live for himself; he lived for the good of the church. The interests of the whole Christian world lay near his heart. He was one of the first to feel the great importance of the Temperance cause, and was not afraid to identify himself with this great reform, even when the good all around him were slow to acknowledge its claims. His person was robust, his appearance gentlemanly; his health was uniformly good, and he was inclined to be laborious. He made visible improvement, and was always considered a good preacher, and, by many, a great one. He labored in the Itinerant field forty years, filling the most prominent places. His style as a preacher was elevated and pure. Who ever heard him use a vulgar or improper word? He had a clear head,—a sound, argumentative mind. He was, during his whole life, eminently a man of faith in God, and in his providential care of his creatures. I remember his charge to his brethren on the district was, 'Do your duty, and God will take care of you.'"

Sanctification, as taught by Methodists, was a favorite theme with him. He was anxious that this higher form of Christian experience should be more distinctly comprehended, and more generally preached and experienced in the church. He spoke of it with the usual interest of our earlier preachers on the subject. "It is impossible," he would remark, "to calculate what

a momentum would be given to the work of God, were all his people holy, blameless and undefiled." He knew the moral support and power of this doctrine by his own experience, and "his life," writes one, "was a beautiful testimony in favor of holiness of heart."

It was our happiness to know this sainted man intimately, and to reside many months in his household; — we can testify that these eulogies are not exaggerated. There was a loveliness, a sanctity, in his religious character, that gave an almost superhuman charm to his presence, and procured for him, in familiar conversation, the soubriquet of "Saint John." A youthful friend speaks of him as follows, in a private letter: "Long shall I remember the many earnest, affectionate lessons he taught me, adapting himself to my childishness, strewing flowers all along the paths of religion, leading me to realize, as no other person ever did, that 'her ways are ways of pleasantness,' and making it seem so possible, and so easy withal, to *have faith in God.* When I was a child, my love for him amounted to veneration; and, afterwards, I found my childish love and veneration growing deeper and stronger. Never shall I forget the pleasant hours I spent during our quiet rides about Schenectady. His quick perception of the beautiful in nature, — from the pebble by the wayside to the bird flying skyward, — everything spoke to him of God. It seemed to me that he could look right into heaven, so vivid were his conceptions of the 'kingdom to come.' Do you wonder that I had high and holy resolves, and that I felt my faith had grown purer and stronger?"

His death was accompanied with much suffering, but equal resignation. "During the latter part of his third year on the Albany district, he was quite unwell; but, with his characteristic energy, he kept at work till within two or three months of the Conference, when he was violently attacked by a complaint of the kidneys. It was considered doubtful whether he would recover from this attack; but he rallied again, went to Conference, and from Conference to his work, with his accustomed cheerfulness and zeal. His old malady, however, soon returned, so that, after the close of September, 1849, he was never able to

resume his official duties, though he fondly hoped to do so until within a few days of his decease." A member of the family writes thus respecting the closing scene: "During my father's last illness, he received great support under his sufferings, and would often speak of the Divine manifestations to his soul. The last night of his life, he remarked to a lady near him, '*There is something above pain.*' In his last mortal agony, he said, with holy assurance, '*The Lord will help me.*' Help came from above. He who 'giveth his beloved sleep' was with him. The light of God's countenance shone on him, — a blissful smile lighted up his face, — he was at rest." *

His youngest daughter writes us: "During his last sickness he would speak to us of the *fulness* and sufficiency there was in the Saviour, and repeat, '*What a fulness!*' When we inquired of him how he had passed the night, he said, 'I never have a poor night; my nights are all just as my Heavenly Father sees fit to give me.' The promise, 'Lo, I am with you always,' was sweetly verified unto him."

George Gary is known to the church generally, by long and faithful services in the ministry, as also by his special connection with our Oregon mission. He was born December 8, 1793, in Middlefield, Otsego County, N. Y. His parents were from Windham County, Connecticut. After the death of his mother, which occurred when he was about two years old, his father returned with him to the old Gary neighborhood in Pomfret, the place of his own nativity. In this town George remained until he entered the Itinerant ministry. He frequently heard his father and others talk of the circuit preachers who had visited his dying mother in the new country, in New York. In these conversations, he learned, with great delight, that his mother died in peace, and with a blessed hope of the life to come, through the instrumentality of the Methodist preachers. These accounts left a permanent impression upon his young heart, an impression which was marked with a veneration for Methodist preachers, and a tender conscience for sacred things. He was never known to use profane language, and his conscience

* Minutes, 1850.

was always sensitive to religious impressions. In the summer after he was thirteen years old, he commenced a praying life, though the fact was unknown to any one but his Heavenly Father and himself. These seasons of prayer were frequent and somewhat regular, though they were attended with but little relief to his awakened mind. "He saw and felt himself to be a sinner, — a sinner exposed to the perdition of the ungodly. On the evening of the 7th of December, 1807, under the ministry of the memorable Elijah R. Sabin, in the memorable house of the late Noah Perrin, in Pomfret, near the Quinabaug river, he saw his way to Christ Jesus; and in the prayer-meeting after sermon, he found relief, great relief, to his burdened and troubled spirit. This was in the evening of the day before he was fourteen years old." *

Religion made a very visible impression upon his character and life, notwithstanding his previous uprightness. He was made "*wise* unto salvation," and the great propriety and prudence of his daily walk secured general influence to his religious professions. The Lord had chosen him for himself, and early designated him to the work of the ministry. In the month of March, 1808, he received his first impressions upon the subject. These were attended with a painful struggle of mind. The conflict lasted months, without his saying anything to any one, or any one saying anything to him, upon the question. His mind settled upon the purpose to do his duty as the door opened before him. A frequent perusal of Jeremiah 1: 7—9 aided him very essentially in determining upon this purpose. In December, 1808, about the time he was fifteen years of age, E. R. Sabin, his Presiding Elder, sought frequent interviews with him, and gave him appropriate counsels from time to time; and under his directions young Gary commenced holding meetings. He thus found himself *preaching*. In the spring of 1809 Sabin took him to sundry places on his district, at which he occasionally exhorted, and more than once formally preached. In the month of May, at the last Quarterly Meeting for the Conference year on Pomfret circuit, he was licensed to preach, and also

* Letter to the author.

recommended to the New England Annual Conference, as a suitable person to be admitted into the travelling connection; and within a very few days of the time he was fifteen years and a half old, his name was on the records of an Annual Conference as a travelling preacher, — the youngest candidate ever received in the M. E. church.

He was sent to the Barre circuit, Vt. Equipped with horse and saddle-bags, — the customary outfit of the primitive Methodist preacher, — the young Itinerant started alone, on a journey of nearly two hundred miles, to his field of labor. As he mounted his horse, an uncle, who was a Methodist, and an acute judge of human nature, gave him some sagacious counsels, one of which he never forgot. "Never," said he, "pretend that you know much, George; for, if you do so pretend, the people will soon find out that you are sadly mistaken: neither tell them how little you know, for this they will find out soon enough." As he urged his way to the north, he dropped many a tear at the recollection of his home, and the anticipation of what was before him. When he arrived on his circuit, it seemed hardly credible to the people that one so young could have been sent as their preacher; he had, however, the invariable symbols of the office, — the horse and saddle-bags; these could hardly be doubted, and soon his youth, instead of being an objection, became, in connection with his piety and rare good sense, an attraction to the multitude. The people thronged to his appointments. "In my Presiding Elder, Thomas Branch," he writes, "I had just the friend, counsellor and father, I needed. Mr. Branch was affable, tender-hearted, kind to the timid and young, — a model Methodist preacher, and made a happy impression upon my mind in the beginning of my ministry."

He attended the Conference of 1810. Asbury and McKendree looked upon him with surprise, for they had never before seen one so young venture into the conflicts of the Itinerant field. Asbury approached him, and placing his hands on the young evangelist's head, blessed him in the name of the Lord. "We cannot," said the venerable apostle, "we cannot promise you ease, nor honor, nor money; but work enough while you live, and the crown of

life when you die." His appointment was Union circuit, Me. At the Conference of 1811, he was ordained a Deacon, by Asbury, and sent to Orrington, Me. This was a laborious "three-weeks' circuit," but he found an excellent counsellor and helper in Enoch Mudge, who then resided in Orrington. "In this great and good man," he writes, "I found one of the fairest and best samples of a Methodist preacher. With this model before me very often (for I was with him a great deal), I was highly favored. No man ever helped me more, in giving me just views of arranging and connecting the parts of a sermon, and of understanding the sacred text, taking into account the context and parallel passages, &c. &c., than this venerable preacher, who now sleeps with the just. If there be in me any valuable traits as a Methodist minister, under God, the timely aid and influence of this father in the Gospel had a hand in moulding them."

In 1812 his appointment was Georgetown and Boothbay, near the mouth of the Kennebec. In 1813 he was transferred, at his own request, to the Genesee Conference, within which his father then resided. "In a short time," he writes, "I was on my horse, directing my course to the west, as it was then called. In due season I arrived at my father's residence, and the place of my own nativity. Here I visited the grave of my mother. I stood there a Methodist Itinerant, over the beloved dust of her who had been instructed and led to Christ by the first pioneers of Methodism in this new country. I felt it a privilege to be a Methodist preacher, out of gratitude to God for the grace bestowed upon her, in her decline to the grave."

He now disappears from the geographical limits of our narrative, but his subsequent services will occupy an important place in the general history of the church. When he went to the "Genesee country," Methodism was yet in its infancy there. It has since spread into bands, — into new Districts, and even new Conferences. Perhaps its present most fertile field in the United States is that section of New York. The labors of Mr. Gary for forty years have had no unimportant agency in its prosperity.

He has acted as a delegate in several General Conferences, been Presiding Elder repeatedly, and spent some time as commissioner for the reörganization of our Oregon mission. In all of these, as in all other responsibilities intrusted to him by the church, he nas shown himself the conscientious, the energetic, the wise man. His head is now hoary with years and toils spent in the cause of his Lord, but he still continues to labor effectively in the Itinerant field. His exceeding prudence, benignity of temper, and unblemished Christian integrity, have endeared him to the church which he has so long and so faithfully served.

CHAPTER XLII.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES, CONTINUED.

Amasa Taylor. — Travels. — Benjamin Jones. — Appointments. — Death. — Character. — Ebenezer F. Newell. — Early History. — Travels. — Incidents. — Edward Hyde. — Enters the Itinerancy. — Appointments. — Character. — Triumphant Death.

Amasa Taylor was born July 9th, 1787, in Fitchburg, Mass., from which place he removed, about his eighth year, to Lunenburg, where he resided in the family of Capt. William Jones, — "a family of blessed memory," he writes.* His early religious education was not remarkably strict. He was accustomed, however, to attend public worship on the Sabbath; but "the minister and the church were what would now be called Unitarians, though not then so distinguished. Neither minister nor church made any pretensions to experimental religion. Capt. Jones and his wife experienced religion a short time after I made a profession, so that I had but little, if any, religious instruction in my youthful days. Nevertheless, I was a child of much conviction and serious reflection, from my eighth to my fourteenth year. I can remember having many deep and serious thoughts about a future state, and what would finally become of me. I felt I was a sinner against God, and often tried to pray, but had no one to instruct me. These impressions gradually wore off, as I began to mingle in society, though I never indulged in profanity, or anything I thought to be sinful."

The autumn after his sixteenth year is memorable to him as the first time in which he heard the Gospel preached by a Methodist Itinerant. "The first Methodist preacher," he says, "who visited Lunenburg, was Joshua Crowell, who is yet living

* Letter to the author, from which we derive our further information respecting Mr. Taylor.

in Ware, Mass. He was then a young man, and full of faith and love. His zealous, powerful mode of preaching was something new, and his word took effect. A number of souls were awakened under his first sermon. His first visit, I believe, was in August; but such were the clamor and false reports, that but few dared to hear him. One of those awakened under his first sermon was Barzillai Pierce, who was for years a powerful preacher, but is now dead. I think it was in the following November that I heard him for the first time. I was convinced of the truth of the doctrine he preached, and that very evening I formed the purpose to seek and serve God, which I trust I have never abandoned wholly, from that time to the present."

Mr. Taylor's religious experience was not attended by those extraordinary and demonstrative evidences which we have so frequently recorded in other instances. "I had," he writes, "at this time but little of the fear of hell or sense of God's wrath. I was led along gradually into, as I hope, the knowledge and love of the truth. It has been a subject of great trial to me, that I could not give a clearer testimony of Christian experience. I often prayed as earnestly for conviction as I ever did for anything; frequently, when I have heard others tell of their deep convictions and sense of condemnation and horror, and their clear and sudden emergence into the blaze of Gospel light, I have almost despaired of having any part or lot in the matter. But, after all, I believe I love God and his people, — I love his cause and his work. I made a profession the spring following Mr. Crowell's visit, and was received by him into the little Class. I often found great comfort in trying to bear the cross of Christ. In those early days of Methodism, we had to encounter a flood of opposition and slander."

In the course of time he began, in company with Barzillai Pierce, to hold prayer-meetings, not only in Lunenburg, but in several neighboring towns, as was the custom with Methodist laymen in those days. At the age of eighteen, he began to feel that he was called to labor more extensively for his Lord; but various hindrances kept him back till the spring of 1809, "when," he writes, "I was brought to that point that I dare not

resist longer; I therefore yielded to what I thought a call to preach Christ and him crucified. I commenced in April, 1809, under the Presiding Elder, Elijah R. Sabin, on Ashburnham circuit, which I travelled three months, in the midst of my old brethren. This was a very heavy cross, but God gave me strength and blessed me." In June of that year, he was received into the New England Conference, and appointed to Tuftonboro' circuit, Me., Benjamin Bishop being his senior preacher, and Martin Ruter, Presiding Elder. This circuit had appointments in sixteen or seventeen towns. "Our labors," he says, "were hard, but God gave us some souls as our hire, though the people gave us but little. All the salary we both received fell short of fifty dollars. Our labors were not then for dollars, but for souls. Some of our brethren on this circuit that year had their cows taken to pay their 'minister tax' to the standing order, so called."

In 1810 he was sent to Lunenburg circuit, Vt. It extended from Lunenburg, Vt., to Hariford, in Canada, on each side of Connecticut river. It was then called the "young preacher's college." There had been great opposition to the Methodists in many parts of it; some of them had been mobbed and threatened with public whippings. "But God gave me favor," writes Mr. Taylor, "in the sight of the people, and a very gracious revival. It was, in fact, one of the best years of my ministry." In 1811 he attended the Conference at Barnard, Vt.; was ordained Deacon, by Bishop Asbury, and appointed to Athens circuit, Vt. "Here I labored alone," he writes; "and yet not alone, for God was with me, and we had some gracious visitations, and a good share of opposition, — some threats of open violence, but the Lord defended and delivered us." In 1812 he was sent to Union circuit, Me. This was not a year of great prosperity, owing to the public excitement of the war with England. In 1813 he was ordained Elder by Bishop M'Kendree, and appointed to Hampden circuit, on the Penobscot river, where he was alone, "and had," he writes, "some of my hardest conflicts and travels; but God was good, and gave me one of the greatest revivals I have ever had. About one hundred converts were received on probation, and nearly the same number joined the

Freewill Baptist church, though we were greatly afflicted by the war, and many families were near starvation."

In 1814 he travelled Danville circuit, Vt., with Shipley W. Wilson as colleague. "We had hard times," he says, "the circuit being near the line of Canada, and the war still raging; smuggling, fighting and backsliding, were the order of the day. Mr. Wilson was a good young man, full of zeal; and we labored hard, but came off with a decrease of seventy-five members. The war ceasing in the winter of this Conference year, he left me and went into Canada, to look up and gather the scattered sheep there."

His subsequent appointments were, in 1815, Vershire, Vt.; 1816, Wethersfield, Vt.; 1817, Barnard, Vt.; 1818, Unity, N. H.; 1819 and 1820, Ashburnham, Mass., where he began his labors. The next year he located, but continued during three years to perform continual services for the church in the vicinity of his residence, and formed the first Class in the town of New Salem, Mass., where he now lives. In 1824 he resumed his travels on Winchester circuit, N. H. He introduced Methodism this year into Winchester, and founded the society there. In 1825 and 1826 he was appointed to Hebron circuit, Ct.; 1827 and 1828, Norwich, Ct.; 1829 and 1830, Warwick, R. I.; 1831 and 1832, Northbridge; 1833 and 1834, Belchertown; 1835, Ludlow; 1836 and 1837, Feeding Hills and Southwick; 1838, South Brookfield; 1839 and 1840, Worthington; 1841 and 1842, Athol; 1843, South Orange and Dana; 1844, Charlemont, and 1845, West Brookfield, — all in Massachusetts. In 1846 he retired into the superannuated ranks, where he still remains, venerated for his long and faithful services, the transparent purity of his character, the gentleness of his manners, and the modest worth which has characterized his whole history.

He writes from his retreat in New Salem: "I am still trying to serve God in my humble sphere. I have a little home here to put my head in from the storm, for which my companion and myself have labored hard, and for which I am greatly indebted to grace. It is now forty-one years since I joined the Itinerant band. During thirty-three of them I received appointments

from the Conference, and through thirty-one of them I have had charge of circuits, most of which were large, requiring much and hard labor. I have had to preach as often as once every day, the year round, besides Class-meetings, prayer-meetings and other labors. I yet preach, occasionally, funeral sermons, and about half of the time on the Sabbaths. When I commenced travelling, our circuits were large, the Methodists few and far apart, poor and despised. I have often known what it was to suffer want of food and raiment. When I started from my first circuit to go to my second, one hundred miles, and all the way among strangers, I had about two dollars to pay my expenses. In those first years I thought myself well used if I received fifty dollars, including everything; for we knew no presents then, — all gifts were reckoned and credited in our accounts. I am now in my rest, daily admonished that my days are fast numbering; and I hope, in the end, to find the better rest of God's dear people."

Benjamin Jones, well remembered and well beloved in Maine, was born in Sandwich, Mass., July 28, 1786. In a manuscript fragment, left among his papers, and written, probably, more than forty years since, he gives the following account of his early Christian experience: "When I was about eleven years of age, I was sent away from home to live with a farmer who resided a few miles distant. About this time, Jesse Lee came into the neighborhood, and preached in the Congregational meeting-house. Soon there was much said concerning 'the Methodists.' A portion of the people, having embraced his (Mr. Lee's) sentiments, sent and obtained a Methodist preacher, by the name of Joshua Hall.* The Lord blessed his labors to the conversion of many souls, and a society was formed. * * I was convinced of my need of a Saviour, and sought the Lord, for a while, in secret prayer; but having none to instruct me, and living some distance from the meeting, I soon grew careless, and found that 'sinning would make me leave praying.' When I was seventeen years

* Mr. Hall is still living, in Frankfort, Me. "His mental eye is not dimmed, nor is his moral strength or influence abated. Though approaching to ninety years of age, he preaches with much power and acceptance nearly every Sabbath."— *Letter of Rev. Mr. Mansfield.*

of age, my attention was again awakened, by the death of my best beloved brother, who was killed by a fall from mast-head. The day it occurred being Saturday, I had thought much of the comfort I should take with him when I went home to spend the Sabbath. But, alas! I found him a corpse! As I followed him to the grave, the next day, I felt my need of religion, to prepare me for death, judgment and eternity! Two years afterward, in the spring of 1805, the Spirit of God once more operated with power upon my stubborn heart. My sins pressed heavily upon me, and the thought that I should have to give an account at the bar of God for all that I had done was more than I could bear. I resolved, in the strength of the Lord, at once to forsake all my sins, and to seek Him with all my heart. And if I did not find him, I was still resolved to perish pleading for mercy. One promise gave me some hope,—'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live,—he shall not die.'" Ezek. 18: 21.

"The result of these exercises," writes one who knew him intimately,* "was a most decided conversion, and a call to preach the Gospel. His struggles and anxieties relative to this duty are known only to himself and to God."

At the age of twenty-two he yielded to his convictions, and began to labor in public as a local preacher; and in 1809 he was received into the New England Conference, and appointed to Union circuit, which then embraced most of the present Thomaston district.

"Having arrived at Union," writes Mr. Mansfield, "he 'started to go round his first circuit for the first time,' July 14, 1809. He appears to have had the most humbling views of himself. The 'burden of the Lord' is upon him. He trembles at his responsibilities, and preaches not himself, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. He goes forth weeping, but he bears precious seed. He covers it with many prayers, and waters it with many tears. It springs up, and brings forth fruit to the glory of God. During his first year in the Conference, he gave the most unquestionable proof of his call to the ministry. Souls

*Rev. D. H. Mansfield, Me.

were awakened and converted under his labors. And if 'he that winneth souls is wise,' then was this young Methodist Itinerant 'a workman that needed not to be ashamed.' Of the few 'brethren' whose godly tents dotted the eastern wilderness at that time, and were a refuge from the storm to the advance guard of Christ's spreading kingdom, he mentions the names of Fletcher and Young, in Lincolnville, Barrett, in Camden, Peabody, in Warren, Whitcomb, in Hope, &c., &c."

He thus began his prolonged labors and sufferings, in the most difficult part of the Itinerant field of that day. All his appointments were in Maine. The following is the long and significant list of them: In 1810 he was designated to Penobscot circuit, which then included a large portion of the territory now embraced in the East Maine Conference. In 1811 he was admitted to Deacon's orders, at a session of the New England Conference, held in Barnard, Vt., June 20th, and appointed to Norridgewock; 1812 he was at Livermore; 1813, he was elected and ordained Elder, and appointed to Bethel; 1814, at Hampden; 1815, Union; 1816, Union and Hampden; 1817, Orrington and Penobscot; 1818, Hallowell; 1819, Unity. In 1820, at a Conference held in Nantucket, Mass., Kennebec district was divided, and he was appointed Presiding Elder of Penobscot district, which office he honored for four years. At this period of his ministry, and for several succeeding years, he was considered one of the ablest, as he was undoubtedly one of the most popular, preachers in New England; 1824, he was at Pittston; 1825, at the first session of the Maine Conference, held at Gardiner, he was sent to Bristol; 1826 and 1827, Vassalboro'; 1828, Fairfield. In 1829 he was made supernumerary, and appointed to Searsmont. "It was during this year," says Mr. Mansfield, "that I first became personally acquainted with him, and, with nine others of my father's family, was converted to God under his labors. Never, before that time, had I heard the Gospel in its power and fulness. Never, since that time, have I heard more effective preaching from any man."

In 1830 he was made effective, and appointed to Bucksport and Orrington; 1831, Orrington; 1832, he was elected a dele-

gate to the General Conference at Philadelphia, and appointed to Bristol; 1833, Union; 1834, Northport; 1835, Belfast and Prospect; 1836, elected a delegate to the General Conference at Baltimore, and appointed to Friendship; 1837, Friendship; 1838, Camden and Northport; 1839, Searsmont, Camden and Vinalhaven; 1840, Searsmont; 1841, Monroe; 1842 and 1843, Lincolnville; 1844, Washington; 1845, he was made supernumerary, and appointed to Lincolnville.

In 1846 he honorably retired into the ranks of his superannuated brethren. He ceased not to labor, however, until within a short time of his death. His last sermon was at Palermo, where he was attacked with his final illness, and returned to his home to die. "The disease which closed his earthly pilgrimage was," writes Mr. Mansfield, "an affection of the heart. During a long and severe illness, the grace of God more than prevented a murmur — made him more than resigned. He blessed the Lord for all his afflictions. As he drew near to death he was much engaged in prayer. A short time before he breathed his last, he requested to be raised in his bed, when, being supported by two persons, he uttered a most affecting prayer, which was his last outward act of devotion to God. When too feeble to rise, he gave utterance to the deep feelings of his heart, by repeating again and again, 'Bless the Lord!' The last audible whisper heard by mortal ears was 'GLORY! GLORY!' The 'weary wheels of life stood still!'— and Father Jones, having preached the glorious Gospel of the blessed God with remarkable success for FORTY-TWO years on earth, was 'transferred' to the General Assembly of the church triumphant, on the 18th of July, 1850, and appointed to a goodly station among the patriarchs, prophets and apostles, in heaven."

Benjamin Jones was no ordinary man. It is doubted whether any one of his brethren who survive him in the Eastern States has witnessed more conversions as the results of his labors. Revivals almost invariably attended his preaching. He had great accuracy and power in the delineation of moral character, and resistless force in the application of his discourses. Hardened men would often sit spell-bound and trembling under his word,

or, if able to move, would flee from the presence of the powerful man of God. Our correspondent already quoted says: "He was decided in his opinions and unmistakable in his positions — always sincere, always in earnest. His punctuality had passed into a proverb. If a storm occurred at the time of any of his appointments and caused some to doubt that 'the minister' would come, even the careless unconverted, who knew him, would immediately correct them by saying, '*It is Elder Jones' appointment; if he is alive, he will certainly be here.*' The hills and valleys, and mountains and rivers, of Maine, have borne testimony to his toils and faithfulness, in storm and sunshine, for more than forty years; and her deep forests and silent glens have witnessed his tears and echoed to his prayers for the conversion and salvation of her people. If I could have the privilege of hearing but one more sermon during my probation on earth, and he were still alive, I would choose that he should be the preacher."

The venerable Ebenezer F. Newell has been frequently referred to in the foregoing pages, and so characteristic is everything from his pen, that the reader must already enjoy a familiar acquaintance with him. He was born in North Brookfield, Mass., Sept. 1st, 1775. His strict moral education led him to early religious habits, and almost from his infancy his mind was addicted to serious meditation and prayer. As he advanced in youth, infidel speculations swayed his opinions and led him into irreligious habits; but on visiting the province of New Brunswick, in 1799, he became acquainted with Rev. Mr. McCall, noted in the history of Methodism in that part of the continent. His conversations with this good man resuscitated his early impressions. "Conviction," he writes, "began to affect my mind. The dark clouds of error which had hung over me seemed to be breaking. The remembrance of several deaths which had occurred, attended with some remarkable and affecting circumstances, served to fix my mind upon the subject, and to lead me in a train of solemn and heart-searching reflections." These anxieties deepened profoundly. "I read and prayed," he says, "until a late hour at night, while others slept, fearing that if I went to sleep I might wake in hell, no more to sleep, or

rest, forever! Glimmering hopes and gloomy fears alternately hung o'er my head. I clung to the Bible as my only chart and guiding star; to none but God could I go for help. At this time I was a constant attendant on the preaching of Rev. D. McCall. His preaching was clear and forcible, although his doctrine was new to me, who had been bred up under the Calvinistic creed. I now saw clearly that my infidelity was the legitimate fruit of Calvinistic fatality and decrees! This man of God pointed out my errors clearly to my mind, and I saw his doctrine was in accordance with the plain teaching of the Holy Scriptures; I therefore exchanged the doctrine of decrees for that of free moral agency and accountability. My blind, cheerless, and dark sentiment of no future state of conscious existence, fled before the cheering light and truth of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the immortality of the soul! Also, of a future judgment, and rewards for the righteous and wicked according to the deeds done in the body. I did not, at this time, think myself a Christian; but could say, I will serve God at the expense of all things! My sentiment was, Let my name be written in the Lamb's book of Life, and I care not what the world does with it; they may frown or flatter,—by the grace of God I will seek to lay up treasures above."

His evidence of acceptance with God soon became clearer, and at last settled into the steadfast and serene "assurance" of faith. He subsequently resided at Castine, Maine, and was here much confirmed in his Christian experience by the ministrations of the Methodist Itinerants, who were then proclaiming the word of life in that part of New England. Here, also, he began to labor somewhat in public, by holding prayer-meetings, which were instrumental in spreading a deeper piety in the vicinity.

In 1802 he removed to Pembroke, N. H. At this time he was led into a deeper experience of the things of God. "One day," he says, "when on my knees in prayer, I had such a view of my unsanctified nature that it greatly alarmed me; restless and unhallowed propensities cried aloud for gratification. My first thoughts were, to leave the throne of grace, fearing it was an abomination to God to appear there with such a heart! But

it seemed, if I left the throne, that I should yield to the first temptation I met. Here my affrighted heart said, All my pretensions to religion are vain; and I was on the point of giving it up, when this promise, 'He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver,' &c., relieved my mind. Before the increasing light of Bible promises all my doubts fled; my soul, filled with peace, joy, and love, sank down into the vale of meekness, and rested upon the promises of God as upon a rock that never sinks, exulting in the lively hope of being prepared by the purifying flame of the *Divine Spirit* for the society of saints, angels, and God forever. Earth had no power over me; a view of the Redeemer of man quenched all my desires, save that of glorifying Him in my 'body and spirit which are his.' By watching and prayer, I was enabled to live so as not to feel condemnation; and if, in any case, I gave way to temptation, instead of sinking under doubts whether I had ever experienced religion, I ran immediately to the throne of grace, and, like a little child, lifting my guilty heart, implored forgiveness and help. And, to the honor of his name be it spoken, he caused me to see clearly my faults, and feel keenly my guilt; and then, oh then! his healing hand wiped off the guilt, removed the pain, and opened to my view a fountain of mercy, in the contemplation of which, the mind is lost in wonder, love and praise. I now felt the necessity of cultivating the fruits of the Spirit,— love, joy, peace, &c. In the inspired volume I clearly saw that 'holiness to the Lord' should be written upon all my thoughts, words and deeds. With pleasure and profit I meditated upon the parable of the husbandman, — the well-cultivated field, producing an hundred fold. Matt. 13. And I could not content myself with the idea of improving a part, and leaving a wide headland for briars and thorns; so I said within myself, *Plough up to the fence* — give no chance for either tares or thorns to grow. I began with my thoughts and words, and soon found that, whatever transpired before me, I could, by lifting my heart up to God in breathings of prayer, turn to the glory of God the good of myself and others. In so doing I found the graces of the Spirit began to appear

and thrive; humility supplanted pride, — zeal to do good to friends and foes took the place of prejudice, anger and resentment; I exchanged ignorance for knowledge, and the fear of God raised me above the fear of man; the thoughts of the last great day banished the dread of what man might say of me."

Thus inducted into the profounder experimental knowledge of religion, it pleased God, in due time, to call him to teach others. During several years he labored as an exhorter and local preacher, travelling to and fro, in the intervals of his business engagements; sometimes, as we have seen, into the remote parts of Vermont, and even Canada, and teaching the people, in their log-cabins, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1809 he was received into the New England Conference, and sent to Hallowell circuit, Me., where he labored with success. This year he also married his devoted wife, who became a distinguished helpmeet to him in his ministerial trials and labors, and whose sanctified life and great usefulness have been commemorated in a published memoir. In 1811 he was appointed to Danville circuit, Vt. "The circuit," he writes, "was large, embracing sixteen towns, and was called a 'four-weeks' circuit.' Having about twenty-four regular appointments for preaching, and other occasional ones to attend to, besides visiting from house to house — Class-meetings and prayer-meetings, left us but little time for private improvement, or to stop for storms and bad going; and, by the blessing of God, we rarely disappointed a congregation. The tears of the penitent, songs of the convert, joy of the saints, and the prosperity of Zion, encouraged us along through storm or calm, night or day, with cheerful steps."

His appointment in 1812 was Barre circuit, Vt., where he labored indefatigably and with much success, and suffered not a little, also. Amidst the fatigues and privations of his Itinerant life in this then remote and mountainous circuit, his Journal affords many exceedingly entertaining and characteristic scenes. His preaching appointments were incessant, — his journeys, especially in winter, exhausting, and his wife in ill health.

"For several weeks," he says, "I have travelled over the frozen ground from one to twenty-five miles, out and in, in a day, many of the days, to meet my appointments; and, for the want of money, my poor horse had to scrabble over the bad ways smooth shod. But I could say, The Lord is near; he protects me in the dark and in the storm; he is my shield and buckler, my strong tower and hiding-place. Glory to God for the sweet peace that flows down to me whilst in the pathway of duty. Being unwilling to neglect the church or my wife, I rode day and night to preach, &c., returning about midnight usually, and taking care of my feeble companion the rest of the night, whom the Lord and her parents had committed to my care, trusting in God for health and strength to carry me through. I desired to do every duty faithfully, so that, when called to give an account for the deeds done in the body, I might not be found guilty of betraying my trust, either with regard to the church of God or my dear family."

Here is a scene which might have befitted the simplicity and piety of the patriarchal age, and an address which might have befitted one of the old Hebraic prophets. "We rose early, and had a melting season of devotion; we had a cheering confidence in God. At eight o'clock in the evening our hearts were made glad. * * * * When my first-born son was put into my arms, I had the household called together, and addressed them thus: — 'Here is a little spark just lit up that will never go out; the sun, moon and stars, will fade and cease to shine, when the worlds shall pass away and no place be found for them, — but this immortal spirit will live, and blaze, and burn in glory, surrounded with angels and saints, — or sink in black despair eternally! Therefore, let us kneel down and commend him to God, and plead that he would preserve him from the evils that are in the world, or take him up to heaven.' After prayer, I carried him and put him into his mother's bosom, saying, 'Take this child, and train him up for God.'"

Pressing his way onward through nearly all kinds of difficulties, he at last met with one which seemed formidable in the extreme for an Itinerant, but which he notices in the following

characteristic style: "On the night of the 21st of May, I had my horse stolen. Lord, have mercy on the man or persons who stole him, and forgive him or them, and prepare us all for the final judgment!" Such a man, however, could not be destitute of friends; they provided for this exigency, and soon he was riding a new steed on his way to Conference, with a very congenial and very like-minded man, the good Lewis Bates. These brief extracts furnish a better conception of the interesting character of this veteran Itinerant than could be given by pages of general remarks.

His appointment in 1813 was Barnard circuit, Vt. The war raged, and much suffering prevailed. "Like Paul," he writes, "we were sometimes 'in want;' one day I went in pursuit of food for my little family, but was obliged to return empty and with a heavy heart. But the Lord was better to me than all my fears. I found his word true which says, 'For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of *all these things*. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and *all these things* shall be added unto you.' Matt. 6: 32, 33. On entering the house, my devoted and faithful wife said, 'God has sent relief, — a man who professes no religion has sent a boy with supplies for the present.' We wept, and prayed, and gave thanks, and partook of the sweet morsel. My heart said, 'The world is my parish, the church my home on earth, and God my portion forever.'"

In 1814 he was sent to Pittstown circuit; in 1815, Bristol; 1816, Durham, where he enjoyed great success, and gathered into the church more than one hundred members; 1817, Readfield, where a "general reformation took place;" 1818, Bishop George called, in the Conference, for a volunteer for St. Croix; Mr. Newell offered himself, and was sent to the Calais circuit, St. Croix river. "The Lord was with us," he writes, "and gave us a glorious revival of religion." The next year he located, on account of ill health and domestic necessities; he continued, however, to labor diligently in the church, and was instrumental of a fruitful revival at Hallowell, Me. After two years he rejoined his Itinerant brethren, and was sent to Thomaston cir-

cuit. In 1822 he was appointed to Norridgewock; 1823, Pittstown; 1824, Columbia and Dennisville; 1825, Conference missionary, and agent for Readfield Seminary; 1826–7, Bethel; 1828–9, Kennebunk Port; 1830, Kittery; — all these appointments were in Maine. In 1831 he was transferred to the New England Conference, and appointed to Brookfield circuit, where he continued two years; 1833–4, Belchertown; 1835, Northbridge and Uxbridge; 1836, Hopkinton and Holliston; 1837, Marlboro'; 1838, North Brookfield; 1839, Paxton; 1840–1, Southbridge, — all in Massachusetts.

At the New England Conference of 1842 he was returned superannuated. He was now sixty-seven years of age, and had braved the hardest conflicts of the Itinerant field for thirty-six years. He had done faithful service, and exemplified the patient, self-sacrificing spirit of a "good soldier of Christ." It was fitting that he should repose himself in his tent a while, before the conflict with "the last enemy."

Mr. Newell still lives, venerable with years, strong in faith, giving glory to God. He resides in Brookfield, amidst the associations of his native home. It would be superfluous to add any remarks on his amiable character, which has so visibly revealed itself in the course of our narrative. His serene piety, universal charity, religious trustfulness, facility of discourse and conversation, and overflowing sympathy for all who suffer, have endeared him to the church generally.

Edward Hyde's memory is still precious in the church. He was born in Norwich, Conn., March 31, 1786. His father was one of the earliest members of the Methodist society in that town, and a useful local preacher. Edward's education was such as to lead him in childhood to serious reflection, and in his seventeenth year, when a wide-spread revival prevailed in Norwich, he was converted to God; "and thenceforward," writes one of his brothers,* "he kept his course steadily along, up to the day of his triumphant death."

He immediately addicted himself to the personal efforts for the salvation of souls, which, in those days, were characteristic

* G M. Hyde, Esq.

of almost all Methodists. "His custom," says Rev. Dr. Fisk, "was, for some time before he began to preach, to select some individual whom he knew to be serious, and continue to exhort him, to pray with and for him, and conduct him to meetings, until he could rejoice in hope. He would then take another; and thus he continued, until he commenced his public ministry."*

He began public labors as a local preacher in 1809, and soon after was summoned into the Itinerant work, by his Presiding Elder, Elijah R. Sabin. The separation of a young man from his family for the chivalric devotion of the travelling ministry was in those days an era in his life. With young Hyde and his family it was an occasion of pathetic interest. "This separation," says Pres. Fisk, "from his father was the more painful, because the old gentleman had designed Edward to remain with him, and be the staff of his old age. Painful as it was, however, the father, for the sake of the cause, made the sacrifice willingly, and furnished his son with the means of joining the travelling connection. The Sabbath before he was to start on his work, the old gentleman delivered a sermon on the occasion. 'I never before,' says Mr. G. M. Hyde, 'saw my father so much affected.' Indeed, none but one who has passed through such a scene can fully enter into the feelings it produces. To part with a son under such circumstances, what parent but must feel? With a heart deeply solicitous for the cause of God, and with bowels of affection yearning over a beloved son, the father on this occasion delivered, in behalf of the son to the people, and in his own behalf to the son, his solemn charge and valedictory. It proved the last parting; for the following April, and before Edward returned, the father fell asleep in Christ. On the morning following this interesting Sabbath, before any others of the family were up, except the father, Edward left. His heart, it seems, was too full to go through the accustomed ceremonies of parting, and he therefore availed himself of this early hour to leave the paternal dwelling. 'I saw him, from my chamber,' says the brother already quoted, 'as he started, before sunrise, upon the

* Funeral sermon, by Rev. Dr. Fisk.

work, from which he never desisted, till called off by his last sickness to lay down his body and his charge together.' But that last parting scene between the father and the son, who can describe? There were none to witness it."

In 1809 he was received on trial by the New England Conference, and sent to Poplin and Salem circuit, N. H. His subsequent appointments were, in 1810, Readfield, Me.; 1811, Scituate circuit; 1812, Martha's Vineyard; 1813, Tolland; 1814, Somerset, Bristol and Rhode Island; 1815, Warwick; 1816, Pomfret; 1817, Ashburnham; 1818 and 1819, New London circuit; 1820 and 1821, Wellfleet. The four following years he superintended Boston district, after which, for four years, he presided over the New London district. In 1830 he was again placed on Boston district, and in 1831 he was stationed at Wilbraham, and took charge of the steward's department of the Wesleyan Academy there.

At nearly all these appointments he witnessed good results from his labors, and in some of them extensive revivals. "I have heard it stated," says Dr. Fisk, "and believe it to be correct, that he rarely failed of having revivals on the circuits he travelled. According to the Minutes, he had a net gain, the first year he was on New London circuit, of 362; and the first year on Wellfleet circuit, 208. While on the districts, also, most of his years were years of quiet prosperity to the church. I recollect to have heard our venerable Bishop George bear testimony to Bro. Hyde's success as a minister of the Gospel. 'Bro. Hyde,' said the Bishop, 'is generally favored with gracious revivals, wherever he labors.'"

Mr. Hyde's talents were respectable, but not preëminent. He was deeply devout, self-sacrificing, zealous, ready for any labor for the Gospel; and these traits rendered his ministry always acceptable, notwithstanding a vocal defect, which at first could not but be disagreeable to the ears of his hearers. He was remarkable for his punctuality; and never lost an appointment, it is said, from the beginning to his last sickness, through care of his health. His widow said, that "In living with him twenty years, I never saw him angry, and never heard him speak an unpleasant word.

I never saw him light or trifling; but he would often check this spirit in others. His motto was, to speak evil of no man. It has been a great satisfaction to me, in this my time of affliction, to reflect upon our peaceful union, and that through grace I was ever kept from opposition to his calling as an Itinerant minister; although my afflictions and privations have been great. And this my dear husband realized in his dying hour. 'O,' said he, 'what comfort it affords me now, to think how pleasantly we have spent our lives together!'"

It would not be irrelevant to commemorate here, in a word, the peculiar and eminent devotion of this lady, who was a congenial helpmeet to him in his laborious ministerial life. "Her zeal for the cause of religion and Methodism, — for the awakening and conversion of sinners, — her warm sympathy for mourners in Zion, and her tender solicitude for young converts, were," says one who knew her well,* "prominent traits in her character, and worthy of the best days of Methodism. Many now in heaven, or on their way thither, have been aided and cherished by her counsels and prayers. It is rare, in these days, to find a woman so earnest and efficient in the heavenly mission of saving souls."

It was at Wilbraham that the author had the pleasure of forming an acquaintance with Mr. Hyde, and was privileged to witness some of the latest scenes of his devoted life. He was at this time suffering under the effects of hemorrhage of the lungs; but so insidious was the disease, that not until within a week before his decease was he aware of its fatal character. The sudden transition from the hopefulness of life to the certainty of death had, however, no terror to him. He immediately resigned himself to the will of God with undisturbed composure, and even a rapturous appreciation of Christ's sufficiency for him in the extremity which was at hand. "*O, the atonement! the glorious atonement!*" he would exclaim, until his heart would seem ready to burst with joy and gratitude. Entire sanctification, as expounded by Wesley and his followers, had always been a favorite theme with him. It was now the subject of his

* Rev. Prof. True.

continual and glowing discourse. On the last Sabbath which he spent out of heaven, the writer, when about to mount his horse to depart to a neighboring preaching appointment, was called to take his final leave of him; he knelt by the sick bed, while the trembling hands of the dying saint were placed upon his head, and the solemn admonition given, with an indescribable earnestness, "Preach holiness! oh, preach holiness, holiness, holiness!" "He stated," says Pres. Fisk, "to his companion that he had for years enjoyed that 'perfect love that casteth out fear.' And it was a doctrine which he delighted to dwell upon. He spake of it to almost all who came in, and seemed never weary in pressing it upon those who gathered round his bed. He had but one thing more that he desired on earth, he said, and that was to stand once more among his brethren in the ministry, and especially in the New England Conference, and exhort them to holiness of heart and life, and urge them to preach holiness to the church. He seemed desirous especially to leave his dying testimony in favor of this doctrine to his brethren in the ministry — a rich legacy! a martyr's testimony!"

His death was triumphant. "Several," says Dr. Fisk, "who were in the habit of visiting him, stated that they could not make it seem like the apartment of a dying man. 'If God should offer me the world,' he said, 'and *add to it two thousand worlds*, I would not choose to go back to life.' At one time he thought himself dying, but revived again. The next day, a brother from the neighborhood called on him, and said, 'Well, Bro. Hyde, you are with us yet.' He replied, with a tone and emphasis the most natural and easy, — 'Yes; I thought I should have gone home yesterday, but it seems I am to stay a day or two longer!' He often shouted aloud the praises of God. Yea, he seemed to live in the very element of joy; and in this happy frame he continued day after day. His last words were, — '*The chariot is come!*' — '*Don't you see them?*' — 'GLORY TO GOD!' — 'HALLELUJAH!!' and then, with a few motions of the lips, he gently breathed out his soul to God."

Such an end is a befitting scene with which to end the series

of our biographical sketches. Those of our first year concluded with the dying exclamation of the heroic Garrettson: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Hallelujah, hallelujah!" Through the whole series we have seen these remarkable men disappearing, one after another, from their well-fought conflicts, with similar triumphs; and here we close the list with the dying "Hallelujah" of the last one who comes within the limits of our narrative.

CHAPTER XLIII.

REVIEW. — CONCLUSION.

Success in Maine. — New Hampshire. — Vermont.

Much success attended the labors of the present year. There were now twenty circuits in the Province of Maine. Methodism had spread itself out into the remotest settlements. It was not numerically strong in any one locality, but almost universally diffused; and the germs of its rapid subsequent growth were generally planted. Twenty-five energetic men, headed by Soule and Beale, had traversed its villages and wildernesses during the year. Their prosperity had not equalled that of many of their fellow-laborers in other sections of New England. Their increase fell short of three hundred, though numerous revivals prevailed under their ceaseless labors; but if it was yet the day of small things, it was the day of large and certain prospects, and they scattered the good seed with joyful hope of a harvest in due season, — a hope now realized by us, who behold their two districts converted into two Conferences, their twenty circuits and stations multiplied to a hundred and sixty, their twenty-five preachers to nearly two hundred, and their thirty-five hundred members to more than twenty-one thousand.

Among the laborers in Maine the present year were Soule, Kibby, Virgin, Kilburn, Beale, Hillman, Newell, Jones and Fogg. The later success of Methodism in the State is not surprising, when we recall the men whose robust arms laid its foundations.

Ebenezer F. Newell travelled Hallowell circuit. "Such," he says, "were my desires to go to Kennebec river, that I told my Presiding Elder I was confident we should have a reformation; and so it proved, — the second quarter the work began. In Augusta we had a most interesting Quarterly Meeting. The

Sacrament was administered on the green in front of the barn, where preaching had been attended. At the close of the Sacrament services, an invitation was given to penitent mourners to come forward; and from every part of the ring formed by spectators standing around they eagerly rushed forward and filled the seats (which were three or four in number, each from twenty to thirty feet long), of every class and age. They all bowed down and wept during a season of prayer, and those who did not come forward seemed almost persuaded to seek the Lord also. One young man told me that he looked to see who they could be that were thus humble; and, to his surprise, he saw his own sister, with all her proud, gay dress, kneeling there! He asked himself, Could pride lead her to do that? And he felt constrained to answer, No; it must be the power of God! And I must be thus humble, he said to himself, or never go to heaven! The sight of his eyes and his reflections affected his heart; and, as he told me, he had no rest from that time until he sought and found pardon and peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I baptized him, and he was called of God to preach the Gospel from that time. The reformation continued, and spread rapidly from Fairfield through Waterville, Sidney, Augusta, Hallowell and Gardner."

On the New Hampshire district, a band of twelve itinerants, commanded by Martin Ruter, spread the truth with success over their nine circuits, from Massachusetts to beyond the Canada line, and from Maine to the interior of Vermont. Bates, Blake, Taylor, Bishop, Clark, and other similar men, were among them, — men of few pretensions, but staunch, laborious, and always successful. They reported many displays of the power of the Spirit, and a gain of about two hundred and fifty, besides the numerous converts who had, as usual, been gathered into other communions. The early laborers of the New Hampshire district, like those of Maine, looked hopefully to the future. They knew that the great vital doctrines of Christianity which they promulged through the land could not fail of a general popular reception, and a profound popular impression; and they were not disappointed. The three or four evangelists

who still remain from the year under review now behold their original district changed into a large and thriving Conference, their nine appointments converted into three districts and eighty-six circuits and stations, their little corps of twelve preachers increased to more than a hundred, and their membership of sixteen hundred and seventy-three augmented to more than nine thousand.

The Vermont district was travelled this year by Thomas Branch, and comprised seven circuits and ten laborers, among whom were Sias, Wells, Steel and Gary. They traversed the country from the base of the Green Mountains to New Hampshire, and from Massachusetts to beyond the British boundary; one of their circuits lay largely within Canada, and had a Canadian name. Throughout this ample field they witnessed the outpourings of the Holy Spirit, and while they replenished other churches with the abundant fruits of their labors, they gathered into their own more than two hundred and sixty members. It was still with them the day of small things; but they also labored for the future, and the germs which they planted, and so assiduously nurtured, have grown until they shake like Lebanon. Vermont has since been one of the most fertile fields of our cause. The district of Thomas Branch has grown into an Annual Conference, with three large districts; its seven circuits into about seventy appointments; its ten preachers to eighty, and its less than nineteen hundred members to nearly eight thousand.

Young Gary's labors on the Barre circuit excited special interest. His extreme youth attracted the people; his congregations were crowded, and the simple but powerful ministration of the truth directly from the Bible, and his own experience, could not fail of effect. "Many," he writes, "were led to Christ."

Solomon Sias labored with success on Athens circuit. "This," he writes, "was a two-weeks' circuit, the place where John Brodhead admitted over eighty members, on probation, at one time, when he formed the first Methodist society in the town. The Lord visited the circuit with some refreshing showers of grace. In Athens a revival commenced under the following

circumstances: A family, the united heads of which were both members of the M. E. church, and who had several children, had lost much of their spiritual enjoyment, and left the family altar without the morning and evening offering. One of their children, quite young, sitting, in the evening, apparently very thoughtful, turned to his father and asked permission to pray. The family knelt, and he prayed fervently for his parents and the children of the household, and then for the people of the place. And truly from the mouth of this child God did perfect praise. It gave rise to a reformation in the neighborhood, in which about twenty souls experienced religion, and most of them became members of the M. E. church. In Acton, a small town adjoining Athens, there was a revival, and a new Class formed. Forty-five members were received during the year."

The Boston district was superintended this year by George Pickering. Some of the most effective men of the Conference were among his laborers, — Brodhead, Metcalf, Sabin, Munger, Merwin, Webb, Merrill, Hyde and Kent, — but they made no remarkable progress. Revivals occurred on the district, and the churches were invigorated, but the aggregate gains were short of a hundred. Sabin and Munger occupied the metropolitan churches, which now comprised a membership of nearly three hundred and fifty; Lynn included about two hundred and fifty; Nantucket more than a hundred and fifty; Newport, fifty-five, — a small number yet, but it had doubled during the year. The whole district included about twenty-one hundred members. Such was its zigzag course, extending over portions of the present territories of the Providence, New England and New Hampshire Conferences, that no comparative view of the later prosperity of the church in the same limits can be given, — but great has been its advancement. The Boston appointments alone have since almost equalled the numerical strength of the original district; and the present membership of Boston and its immediate vicinity amounts to nearly one-third more than the aggregate membership of the whole district at the period under review. Methodism has had severe trials, and formidable pecuniary struggles, within this section of New England. Only

by the most strenuous endeavors have its churches been planted and its chapels erected; but its difficulties have been constantly abating; its pecuniary capacity and the refreshing sense of security have been continually strengthening, and it has, scattered through almost all the numerous towns and villages of the original Boston district, thriving societies and chapels, which, by their tasteful simplicity and eligible sites, are ornaments of the scenery.

Elijah Hedding and his band of thirteen evangelists on New London district spread the word of life with power and great success. Their circuits were but seven in number, but these extended through large portions of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Hoyt, Lindsay, Bonney, and their colleagues, cultivated this spacious field with unceasing toil; they reported nearly twenty-one hundred members, and gained during the year about three hundred, — no insignificant accession for those days. The soil then sown with the seed of the Gospel, and not without tears, has since been reaped in joy, and has yielded abundant fruit. The present New London district contains more than five thousand Methodists, though its territorial range hardly equals that of one of its original circuits. Local causes imposed upon its churches, especially in Connecticut, great difficulties, and many trials still beset its struggling societies; but it is rapidly emerging from them. Its chapels have been lately undergoing the renovation, and its societies the invigoration, which have so generally characterized Methodism in New England, within the last twenty-five years.

The Rhinebeck district, six of the eight circuits of which were within the Eastern States, was superintended by Aaron Hunt, under whom fourteen preachers labored. Some of them were men of decided force and usefulness; Joseph Crawford, Elijah Woolsey, Phineas Cook, Samuel Cochrane, Laban Clark and Lewis Pease, were among them. Their travels were mostly in a new and rugged part of the country, their labors were great, and their privations and sufferings severe. Their present year was not a prosperous one numerically; their aggregate membership was short of four thousand, — there were no gains, though

no decrease. The adjacent Ashgrove district, under the charge of Wm. Anson, enjoyed better success. It included eight circuits, six of which were wholly, or in part, in New England. Its Itinerant corps consisted of fourteen men, among whom there were, besides Anson, William Swayze, Marvin Richardson, John Robertson, Phineas Rice and Samuel Draper. The membership of the district amounted to about four thousand. It had increased, during the year, more than six hundred.

The two New England circuits on the New York district — Middletown and Redding — were blessed with some prosperity. The former reported a small increase; the latter was travelled by Hibbard, who says, "We had a good revival of religion in different places. The net increase was over *one hundred and fifty*, but I presume that more than three hundred experienced religion. Many joined other denominations. So that it was a time of ingathering of souls."

The entire membership of the New England Conference proper, as reported at the end of the present year, was 11,220, — it had gained during the year 1124. The total number of Methodists in the New England States (including those who pertained to the New York Conference) amounted to 17,592; the total increase of the year had been 1794. The whole membership in the United States was 174,560, — the whole increase of the year, 11,527.

Thus the first decade of the century ended, with Methodism spread out and established in all the New England States. It embraced one extensive Conference, and a large portion of a second. The 4 districts with which it began the century had increased to about 8; * its 32 circuits to 71; its 58 preachers to 114, and its 5839 members to 17,592. These statistics exhibit a remarkable progress, even if we take not into account the quite inauspicious circumstances of the denomination in the Eastern States. In ten years its districts had doubled, its circuits considerably more than doubled, its ministry lacked but two of being doubled, and its membership had more than trebled.

* We say about eight, because the Rhinebeck and Ashgrove districts lay partly in New York, though mostly in New England.

It had gained, in these ten years, 11,753 members, — an average increase of more than 1175 each year, or nearly 100 per month. Its self-sacrificing preachers, who, in their vast labors and great sufferings, were indeed "a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men," might well have exclaimed, in the language of the Apostle to the Gentiles, — "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." There was no considerable section of New England which was not now penetrated or compassed by their circuits; and but few localities which had not occasionally, if not regularly, heard the voice of their ministrations. And that voice was a jubilatic one, — it proclaimed among our hills and valleys the great, soul-saving, elementary truths of Christianity, with the demonstration of the Spirit and power. Such men, with such elements of moral force, could not but succeed. Their success is not a mystery. The only problem of their history is, that a class of public men so unique, so uniformly heroic in spirit and gigantic in energy, so persistent against all odds, and so calmly and confidently self-conscious of success, and of even great historical destinies, should be found among us, and should year after year continue to prosecute their unparalleled labors by the most simple machinery, and with scarcely any appreciable means of support. A scheme of evangelical labor, like that of the primitive Methodist Itinerancy, — involving the same incessant preaching, and daily travelling, and small remuneration, and the same class of agents, — would, if proposed *a priori*, have been considered the absurdity of an extravagant fanaticism. The men whom we have been commemorating wrought out into an energetic and historical reality what the logic of the philosopher and the sagacity of the statesman would have pronounced impracticable to human nature. Down to the date at which we now, with truest admiration, take our leave of them, most of them denied themselves the enjoyments of domestic life, and remained single, that they might the more utterly consecrate themselves to their labors. And notwithstanding the many inconveniences of their ministerial charges,

no trait of their ecclesiastical system has been more tenaciously retained, even in our day, than its Itinerancy.

The example of their leaders, doubtless, contributed much to the energy and self-sacrificing devotion of the body of the ministry. No Methodist bishop had yet been married. Asbury, Whatcoat and M'Kendree, continued through life without a home. They traversed the nation; they preached daily as they went, in churches, court-houses, kitchens, barns and forests. Their "allowance" was no larger than that of the humblest Itinerant. Except M'Kendree, they had no property when they died, save that which they carried about their persons on their routes. It was impossible that the militant ministry of Methodism, thus officered, could be otherwise than heroic and invincible.

More potent than this noble example was the influence of a single great truth, of which the preceding pages have given frequent illustrations, and for which these extraordinary men held themselves especially responsible. Their constant use of the Scriptures had familiarized their minds with the phrases "sanctification," "perfection," "perfect love," &c. Sainted men, not only of the Anglican but of the Papal church, of whom Fenelon was, in both his writings and his life, an illustrious example, had educed from these terms a preëminent standard of Christian life, especially of the inward life of Christianity. They had given a specific and even a technical character to the words. Their opinions, ardent with the very sanctity of the Gospel, and aspiring to what most men deemed an altogether preterhuman virtue, were rendered familiar to the Methodist Itinerants throughout the world, in the writings of Law, Fletcher and Wesley. Every one of them, at his reception into the travelling ministry, had avowed his belief in the doctrine, and that he was "groaning after," if he had not already attained, this exalted grace. Perhaps no single fact affords a fuller explanation of the marvellous success of Methodism. Wesley had observed and declared to them, that wherever it was preached revivals usually prevailed.* It was the great potential idea of Methodism. It not only

* Works, vol. VI., p. 761, and VII., p. 181.

gave it life and energy by filling its congregations with devout and transforming aspirations, but it was the precise sentiment needed as the basis of its ministry. Nothing short of entire *self-sacrifice* could consist with the duties and privations of that ministry; and according to their doctrines of perfection, *entire consecration* was the preliminary of *entire sanctification.* These holy men, then, in making an entire public sacrifice of themselves, did so as a part of an entire consecration to God, for the purpose of their own entire personal sanctification. What ideal of ministerial character and devotion could be more sublime or more effective? And this ideal they realized in the exceeding labors and purity of their lives, and the martyr-like triumphs of their deaths. They have transmitted the great doctrine to us with its simple scriptural purity unmarred by the extravagances which have befallen it in other hands. They found not its personal exemplification by themselves incompatible with a generous enjoyment of such comforts of life as were within their reach, nor with that happy humor which we have repeatedly mentioned, and which relieved not a little the peculiar vexations of their mode of life. Monkish austerity was very seldom found among them, and then only as the result of personal idiosyncrasies, — not of their Methodistic character. If they were entirely consecrated to religion, they were, none the less, large-hearted, liberal-minded, courageous and generally cheerful men; and their religious consecration was the basis of their noble virtues. We close these humble records of them with emotions which it would be difficult to express. May their memory be a savor of life unto life in the church, through the ages to come!

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